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THE

DEATH OF CHRIST.

By Rev. GEORGE G. INGERSOLL.

PRINTED FOR THE

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THE DEATH OF CHRIST.

The Death of Jesus Christ. What was its design and end; the object to be effected by it, the benefit to be secured? All Christians will unite in saying, the salvation of mankind. But, then, all Christians will not mean the same thing, though they use the same words. They have different interpretations of the word salvation, and different accounts of the manner in which the salvation is obtained. By salvation, some Christians understand a deliverance from the perversity, the corruption, the guilt, of sin; while other Christians understand a deliverance from the pains, the penalties, the punishment, of sin. Some Christians believe that Jesus Christ suffered and died for our benefit, and that by his instructions and example, his life, and death, and resurrection, he has furnished directions, inducements, helps, whereby all can be saved; while other Christians believe that Jesus Christ suffered and died in our stead, and that by means of his sufferings and death he saves mankind from that endless doom, to which, as sinners, they were justly liable. Some Christians believe that Jesus Christ died to establish the truths of his Gospel, and to bring life and immortality to

light by his resurrection from the dead; while other Christians believe that he died to satisfy divine justice and make atonement for the sins of men.

As my limits will not allow me to examine into all the views entertained by Christians as to the design and end of the death of Christ, I must, necessarily, select some one interpretation and limit my considerations to that. Even then, I can only touch on the more prominent parts, to furnish hints and suggestions, rather than give a full exposition. As Unitarians, we are generally regarded as rejecting the doctrine of Atonement. The true, Scripture doctrine, we receive, and gladly, as being full of strength and hope. But the interpretation which some put upon it, and even what has been called "the popular doctrine of the Atonement," we do reject. It is well, then, for our own satisfaction, and also out of a proper respect to the opinions of those Christians from whom we differ, occasionally to review the arguments, which have induced us to reject their interpretations of the doctrine, and cleave to our own as more scriptural, intelligible, sanctifying and saving.

What is this doctrine of Atonement, which we thus reject? It has been called one of the doctrines of the Reformation, and a belief in it insisted on as essential to salvation. I will state it. And, to prevent any mistake on my part, I will give the very words of those who sincerely and earnestly have believed or do still believe in it — beginning at the Reformation and coming down to the present day. Luther says, "All the Prophets did foresee in spirit, that Christ should become the greatest transgressor, murderer, thief, rebel and blasphemer that ever was, or could be, in the world. For he being made a

sacrifice for the sins of the whole world, is not now an innocent person, but a sinner. Whatsoever sins, I, thou, we, all have done, or shall do hereafter, they are Christ's own sins, as verily as if he himself had done them." Calvin says, "We understand from these circumstances — of his trial — that he sustained the character of a malefactor, — that in his soul he suffered the torments of a damned and forsaken man, — that the burden of damnation from which we were delivered was laid upon Christ; and that there is no other satisfaction, by which God, being displeased, may be made favorable and appeased." The Church of England, among its thirty-nine articles, has these — "The offering of Christ once made, is the perfect redemption, propitiation, and satisfaction for all the sins of the whole world, both original and actual; and there is none other satisfaction for sin, but that alone. We are accounted righteous before God, only for the merit of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ by faith; and not for our own works or deservings." The Kirk of Scotland, in its Confession of Faith, declares "Christ by his obedience did fully discharge the debt of all who are thus justified, and did make a proper, real, and full satisfaction to his Father's justice in our behalf." In the constitution of the Presbyterian Church in this country, we find "that the Lord Jesus, by his perfect obedience and sacrifice of himself, which he, through the eternal spirit, once offered up unto God, hath fully satisfied the justice of the Father, and purchased not only reconciliation, but an everlasting inheritance in the kingdom of heaven for all those whom the father hath given unto him. And that those whom God effectually calleth, he also freely justifieth, not for any thing wrought in them or

done by them, but for Christ's sake alone, by imputing the obedience and satisfaction of Christ unto them." President Edwards remarks, "Salvation is an absolute debt to the believer from God, for Christ has satisfied justice fully for his sin; so that it is but a thing that may be challenged, that God should now release the believer from punishment. The believer may demand eternal life because it has been merited by Christ." Dr. Woods, of Andover, in his letters to Unitarians, maintains that "God has provided a perfect righteousness as the foundation of hope, and has taught that the salvation of sinners depends wholly on Christ crucified, and that no works of righteousness which they have done, and no accomplishments or dispositions which they possess, must ever be named in his presence; for God has sent his son to be a propitiation, and has told us that we must rely upon his atoning blood, as the sole ground of forgiveness." Professor Stuart, in his discourses on the Atonement, talks of the great expiatory offering made by Christ, and contends that "Christ suffered as our substitute — or that his sufferings and death were an expiatory offering, on account of which our sins are pardoned and we are restored to divine favor." A belief in this doctrine is, also, a leading article with some Universalists — especially such as are inclined to Calvinistic principles, or adopt the views of Murray, who has been called the father of American Universalism. This doctrine is not, as some suppose, held exclusively by Trinitarians. Scott in his "Force of Truth," insists, that "it is a contradiction to believe in the real and consequently infinite satisfaction to divine justice made by the death of Christ, without believing him to be very God of very God." As a reply to

this it may be stated, that it was the faith of the old Polish Socinians "that Christ, by the divine will and purpose, suffered for our sins, and underwent a bloody death for an expiatory sacrifice." They believed in such atonement by Jesus Christ, as also did Socinus himself, who wrote on the subject and gloried in the doctrine. I mention this, that it may be plainly seen, that the name Socinian, which is sometimes put upon modern Unitarians is not at all applicable. Surely, those who believed in the atonement as expiatory, and worshipped Christ, as did the Socinians, differed widely from Unitarians of the present day.

Such is this doctrine of Atonement — whose interpretation is, satisfaction made to the divine justice, for the sins of mankind, by the sufferings and death of Jesus Christ. Had this doctrine been charged upon Christianity by an enemy, I should have wondered at his boldness, and repelled the charge with a moral indignation. Had this doctrine been brought forward by some weak and ignorant believer in the Gospel, I should have pitied his weakness, and felt it to be my duty to enlighten his ignorance. But when I know that it is believed by the wise and good; by men of learning and integrity; those whose sincerity I will not doubt, whose ability I will not question — I confess I am utterly astonished, I am wholly at a loss, I do not know what to say. Blessed be God! I am not called on to judge — neither do I judge my broher. We have all one master, even Christ, and to his own master each one standeth or falleth. But while I feel all respect for individual worth; while I cherish a proper indulgence for weakness common to all, I trust I may be excused from respect or indulgence to the mis-

takes themselves. In what I may have to say, then, I shall have no reference to the advocates, only the opinions ; not to the believer, but the doctrine. And of this doctrine, I must say, in the language of Bishop Hurd — himself a believer and a defender — " it is a doctrine, at which Reason stands aghast, and Faith herself is half confounded !"

The history of this doctrine, in its first rise and subsequent progress, is full of interest; but here it can only be briefly referred to. It required many years to bring it into the shape in which it has been at this time presented. There were several summaries of Christian doctrine made by the early Christians, but in none of these was placed this one. But without dwelling on the testimony of Christian writers for the three centuries after the birth of Christ, — which is as unfavorable to the modern hypothesis of the Trinity, as to the notion of a vicarious Atonement, — it may be said at once, that the latter doctrine was first brought into what may be called a regular shape in 1530, in the Confession of Faith presented to the Emperor Charles the Fifth, at Augsburgh. So that in this sense, it may be called a doctrine of the Reformation. Without following this doctrine through its various alterations and modifications, and assigning to it the earliest origin possible, I still set it down as a corruption of true Christianity. And I do not know that a corruption is any the better for being of long standing — or less to be dreaded because it is old. I think we should rather mourn that it has continued so long ; especially when we remember, that, on a general principle, what has been many years growing, will be a long time in passing away. This doctrine, however, is on the decline. Marks of de-

cay may be seen on it — for while many and many have rejected or are rejecting; so, too, many of those who retain are explaining it in newer and more approved methods, thus making it an "article of peace;" or subscribing to it for "substance of doctrine."

This doctrine owes its origin and continuance to the same unhappy principle that has introduced but too many corruptions into Christianity — that is, wrong views of the character of God. Before the coming of Christ, men made their own gods, and they made them like themselves. Even in that single people where only the true God was known, he is represented as saying, "thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself." Men have retained, since, but too much of the same disposition to fashion their God according to their own liking. The Pagan trembled before his god, and sought to win his favor or avert his anger. So he built his altar, and brought his sheaf, or slaughtered his victim; and as the flame ascended and the cloud of incense rolled, he felt happy in the thought that he had secured the good will of his deity. He went to him, as among men the feeble go to the strong, with a gift in his hands — to conciliate, to propitiate, to buy protection and kindness. He went to his god as the slave to his master, the subject to his king, and kneeled, and sung his song of praise, and offered his present, believing in his heart that his god would smile, even as the master and the king would smile. And this is a plain and rational account of the institution or custom of sacrifice. Precisely in the same way can we account for the doctrine we are considering. Christians were not called on to bring their first fruits, to pour out their wine and oil, or shed the blood of bulls and goats —

so the death of Christ was made a sacrifice. And since man, by his transgressions, was regarded as offending the only true God, the anger of that God was appeased and satisfaction made to his justice by the atonement of his well-beloved son. There is but too much melancholy evidence of the effect of heathenism over Christianity; and when it became the state religion of Rome's great empire, history tells us how sadly successful were the efforts to accommodate the Gospel to a pagan taste. The visiter at the great city, even in our day, plainly discovers the infusion and the influence, and tells a mournful tale of saints and festivals, which have changed the names, but kept the character, of heathen divinities and heathen revels. But alas! the influence over the spirit and doctrines of the Gospel was more subtile and less perceived; and many, who live at a distance from the showy ceremonies of a corrupted faith, are not aware that doctrines they cherish are unhealthy grafts, and not the natural branches of the tree of life.

From such an influence came the doctrine of Atonement. Not, indeed, in the form it now wears; it passed through many transformations — it crept before it flew. Some of the early opinions with regard to this doctrine will sound strangely in modern ears, for, I fear I shall hardly be believed when I say, that the death of Christ was once regarded as the price of our redemption paid over to the being known by the name of Devil or Satan. Yet it was so understood beyond all contradiction. Origen says, "if we are bought with a price, we must have been bought from some person whose slaves we were — but it was the devil that held us. For to him we had been given over for our sins. Wherefore, he demanded

the blood of Christ as the price of our redemption." Neither was this a solitary opinion, for a host of names might be mentioned who also maintained it. Afterwards, it is true, the opinion prevailed that the price was paid to God — though it was not admitted without great hesitation. "Was the price paid to the Father?" says one writer; "but how, for we were not held by him, and how could the Father be delighted with the blood of his only begotten son, when he would not receive Isaac who was offered to him by Abraham."

Not only has there been great difference of opinion as to the person or party to whom was paid the price of human Redemption, but also difference of opinion as to the precise time or "scene of Christ's meritorious suffering." Some have found it in what is called Christ's agony in the garden; in which he is said to have endured the wrath of God, and to have suffered to a degree equal to the everlasting misery which was due to countless millions of mankind. Do we not read in the accounts given to us of this agony, "there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him." From whom came this messenger of mercy to soothe and support? Surely from God. Does this look like such a manifestation of divine displeasure as to justify the horrible declaration that Jesus then felt "the severity of the divine vengeance?" Others have supposed that it was on the cross that Christ endured the "penal suffering." They support this opinion by the exclamation of Jesus — My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me! As Christ, on the Trinitarian scheme, was God-man, or perfect God and perfect man, if God had forsaken Christ, then, as there is but one God, the divine part or nature of Christ had forsaken the human

part or nature; therefore the human nature was left alone to endure. Now, human nature is man's nature, human sufferings, then, are man's sufferings. But man is a finite being. What then becomes of the "Infinite atonement?" On the other hand, if it be maintained that the divine nature, which had, all along, been united to the human nature, still remained — then as the Son is God as much as the Father is God, Christ was not forsaken of God. I ask, if such divine nature did remain, did it suffer, and thus make an "Infinite atonement?" Or, did it remain to support the human part in its agony? If so, I ask, further, what were the sufferings of the cross? What could Christ suffer if the arm of the Almighty sustained him? What pain or torture can touch that being whom the all-powerful Deity is strengthening and upholding? I can see no solution of these difficulties, and most certainly I am not called on to explain and reconcile them. I must confess I do not comprehend how atonement has been made, on the Trinitarian scheme. For, surely, no advocate of that system would contend that the Supreme and Infinite God really suffered and died on the cross: — that for the three days that Jesus was in the grave, the universe was without a God! No; they would believe no such thing. It is said Christ suffered only in his human nature — "where, then I repeat it, is the 'Infinite atonement?' Human nature might, indeed, be exalted by its union with the Divine; still, it would be human, and if human, then finite, and if finite, how could it make an 'Infinite atonement?' Some have fixed upon another scene for the 'penal sufferings of Christ,' and contend that he descended into hell, there to suffer the proper torments of the damned." This, indeed, is the declared

opinion of Calvin. He says, "nothing would have been done by the mere death of Christ, if he had not also afterwards descended into hell, where he sustained that death which is inflicted by an angry God on the wicked." This opinion needs no comment of mine.

Now, let us look upon this doctrine, fairly and steadily. Not, indeed, by the light of reason — this will not answer — for, says one of its zealous advocates, "the satisfaction of Christ is an unaccountable, irrational doctrine, which destroys every natural idea we have of divine justice, and, laying aside the evidence of the Scriptures, is so far from being true, that it is ridiculous." Reason would have many difficult questions to propose. It might ask if holiness be not a personal matter and therefore impossible to be transferred; and how the guilt of the offender could, possibly, be done away by the death of an innocent person. It might ask, too, what kind of justice it is, that could be satisfied by such death — and what kind of mercy it is, that requires full satisfaction — and what kind of forgiveness it is, that demands perfect reparation — and what kind of atonement it is, that is conditional and requires repentance to make it available — and whether, after all, it is not repentance that obtains the pardon; and if so, whether it was not always so — or if the death of Christ has such irresistible efficacy that it saves sinners without their repentance or consent.

Let us turn away, however, from the close questioning of reason, to the sacred Scriptures themselves, as being the sole standard of religious truth, as containing "the Religion of Protestants." To the law and to the testimony. And, here, I hesitate not to say that I must pronounce this doctrine of atonement contrary to the spirit

and character of the scriptures. I shall not examine into the testimony of the Old Testament, or Jewish Scriptures. I could quote passage after passage, from their history and their prophecies, to prove how wholly opposed they are to this doctrine, but it would take far too much time. And besides, I think that a doctrine, which is represented as a peculiar, distinctive doctrine of the Gospel, should be proved from the New Testament, or Christian Scriptures. I wish, indeed, that this could be kept more in view than it is. It is unsatisfactory, perhaps something worse, when I ask for proof of what is called a Gospel doctrine, to turn me over from Jesus Christ to Moses; to refer me to an ancient prophet instead of a Christian Apostle.

The doctrine of vicarious atonement, or infinite satisfaction for the sins of men by the death of Jesus Christ, is utterly opposed to the spirit and character of the Gospel, which is a message of love from a God of love.

I have already said that the doctrine is founded on wrong views of the character of God. We believe God to be immutable, unchangeable, the same forever and ever, without variableness or shadow of turning — therefore, it is not possible that a change can be effected in Him, as to any of his own perfections, or "his dispositions towards any of his creatures." But this doctrine of atonement is plainly founded on the very supposition of such change: — that as before the death of Christ, God was filled with "wrath and vindictive fury," Christ, by his death, appeased that wrath, or turned it into grace. The very necessity of the doctrine arises, not from the nature of man, but the supposed nature of God, since it is represented as designed to take effect on that nature —

it being necessary, in such interpretation, that Christ should suffer and die, not to make man worthy to be forgiven, but God able or willing to forgive.

We believe God to be a being of spotless holiness; infinite in holiness, the Holy One. Consequently he cannot look on sin with approbation. But how can we reconcile with such belief this doctrine, which represents a being without sin suffering the punishment of the really guilty? Is this consistent with holiness? Were I to become a murderer or a thief, what would you think of the judge or the law that should set me free, and send an innocent man, in my stead, to the prison or the scaffold! Would my character be altered thereby? Should I not still be chargeable with the *guilt* of murder or theft, though I thus escaped the *penalty* due to the murderer or thief? Could I be received into favor as innocent, made so by the death of my substitute? Would it not be more correct to say, according to this interpretation, that the death of Christ, instead of taking away the sins of the world, takes away the anger of God for those sins, at the expense of his holiness.

We believe God is a being of unlimited, unchanging, never ceasing mercy. But how is this doctrine consistent with mercy? We are told by one defender of it, "God stood upon full satisfaction, and would not remit one sin without it." Is this mercy? We are told by another advocate that "unless Christ mediate for us, we may pray our hearts out, all will signify nothing, God will neither grant what we desire, nor accept of any thing we do." Is this mercy? It is the mercy of the creditor, that opens the prison door when some one has interfered and paid the full demand. We are told, again, "In a strict

and proper sense, the Infinite God doth not forgive sin, for sure I am, that debt can never be forgiven, which is paid." Is this mercy? But, without considering each of the divine perfections, it is sufficient to say, we cannot place the character of God in any point of view, without finding it impossible to reconcile it with this doctrine of Atonement.

What is the character of the Gospel? I have called it a message of love. It is so, in the widest meaning of that comprehensive word. Its first command is love to that God from whom it came. But, I ask, how is it possible to love such a God as this doctrine represents him to be. An inexorable, vindictive being, unwilling to pardon, seeking the destruction of his creatures, and only prevented from condemning them to endless misery, by the superior benevolence of one who interposes to shield and save, by taking on himself the whole weight of divine wrath. Oh no! we can not love such a being; it is not in our nature to do so. We may fear and tremble even to agony, but we can not love. What, then, must we think of a doctrine which thus forbids us to love our God.

The second command of the Gospel is, to love one another. Are we to love one another as this doctrine represents God loving us? What does the Gospel tell us of forgiving one another? Are we to forgive in the same way, that this doctrine represents God as forgiving us? Are we to forgive men their trespasses in the same way that this doctrine represents God as forgiving our trespasses? We are commanded to overcome evil with good; to return blessing for cursing; if thy brother repent, thou shalt forgive him, and "if he trespass against thee seven

times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I repent; thou shalt forgive him." Must man be kinder and more merciful than God! Is human nature, in its weakness and errors, to be higher and better than the divine nature? Or must we receive a doctrine that gives to God a character which the Gospel forbids us to imitate?

Our Father in Heaven — here is my answer to this doctrine. Our Father in Heaven. I ask each parent, for a moment, to imagine his child before him. That child has offended, but he, now, kneels to him for forgiveness. With streaming eyes and lifted hands, he says, Father, forgive me. He weeps over his past disobedience, he promises amendment — nay, he says, take me on trial, and if I do not reform, then cast me out to die. What human parent would spurn from him a child like this? What human parent would say, I cannot forgive you; but if one of my long-tried, dutiful, innocent children, will come and give his limbs to the fetters, his back to the scourge, and suffer the punishment which you deserve, then I will forgive you and grant you my blessing. And now I ask, what child on earth would accept a parent's blessing on terms like these? What man, with the true feelings of a man, would see his brother groan, and bleed, and faint, because, in his affection, he was willing to endure it all to save him from his father's curse. Shall we dare to imagine such a situation for our Heavenly Father? Is this the interpretation that Jesus would have us give of his own beautiful parable of the Prodigal Son? Must we say, as this doctrine teaches, there is no forgiveness with the Heavenly Father for his repentant child?

What foundation is there in the New Testament on

which to build up this doctrine? It is set forth as a Gospel truth — what is its Gospel proof? There are several terms, expressions, passages, in the Christian Scriptures, which have been supposed to declare this doctrine and to prove it. These I shall now consider. I would observe, previous to such consideration, that there is a wide difference between decided proof and what may be regarded as mere allusion. When a doctrine is firmly established as a doctrine of the Gospel, many passages may, without violence, be considered as alluding to it, and so serve to strengthen a belief in it; which passages, of themselves, are insufficient, in the first place, to establish such doctrine. Thus we see many persons finding their favorite doctrine in every page of the Bible; though, were they not, beforehand, made acquainted with such doctrine, those very same passages would never discover it to them. So with regard to these terms, expressions, passages, which are thought to contain proof of this doctrine of Atonement. Their general character is this, they are highly figurative, and the great error lies in giving to them a literal interpretation. Now, "figures furnish no statement of truth, but take it up after it has been stated." This distinction has been too often overlooked in the gathering up of what are called Scripture proofs of this doctrine of Atonement, as will be evident from a further consideration.

The attention is first directed to those terms applied to Jesus Christ himself, to his person or office. Christ is called Mediator. This term, though never applied by Jesus to himself, and used only by Paul, occurs, in such application four times. Mediator of a better Covenant. Mediator of the New Testament. Mediator of the new

Covenant. The one Mediator between God and men. It is very evident, that in these places there is no reference to the doctrine of Atonement. The same term — Mediator — is applied to Moses, as being the *medium* of divine communication as to the old covenant; so to Jesus Christ with regard to the new. Jesus is once called Advocate. If this title proves any thing as to Christ's rendering God merciful, it proves that his death had no such efficacy. For why should Christ be an Advocate for us with God, if by his death he had already secured his mercy? Jesus Christ is, also, once called by the term surety. "Jesus made a surety of a better testament." His suretyship has no relation to his "becoming responsible for the sins of men." He is the surety only of a better testament or covenant, because the new covenant, that is, the Gospel, was entrusted to his ministry, and established by his death. There is, therefore, no authority for the application of this term that is sometimes made, when Christ is called the "surety of sinners" — or "surety to God for men." The single use of this term, therefore, has no reference to this doctrine of Atonement.

We find several other expressions of a highly figurative character applied to Jesus, the most striking of which is that in which he is compared to a sacrifice. This word in the Scriptures means an offering to the Lord — sometimes, in acknowledgment of dependence — sometimes, as an expression of gratitude — sometimes, as propitiatory. It is this last which Jesus Christ is supposed to be; and, in support of this opinion, reference is confidently made to the Jewish sacrifices said to be "types of the sacrifice of Christ." Now it is a great error to suppose that victims were appointed by God to be offered up in

the place of the sinner: they were intended for an admonitory symbol, and never in the sense of moral substitution. The propitiatory sacrifices of the Jews were appointed in cases of "ritual neglects," or "sins of ignorance." Intentional immoralities had no sacrifices appointed for them. There are only two instances mentioned in which the propitiatory sacrifice was connected with an intentional immorality — in the first, the offender made restitution and then offered his sacrifice; in the second, the offender was scourged and then offered his sacrifice — afterwards both were restored to legal or external privileges. These propitiatory sacrifices were also appointed for places and things, where, certainly, there could be no sin. Now the sacrifice of Christ was either figurative or literal. If it was literal, it must have been accompanied by all those circumstances which were required in literal sacrifices. I believe that not even the warmest defender of this doctrine of Atonement will think of contending that such was the case in the death of Christ. There was surely no priest to officiate at the solemn scene, no offender intentionally offered him up, nor was there any confession of sins made over him, nor was his pure blood sprinkled upon the holy altar. And who believes that the *material* blood of Christ cleanses from sin! No one. When brought to this point, all will acknowledge the sacrifice to be figurative. With this I am content, for I believe it myself. It was a high, and pure, and noble sacrifice, and I venerate with my whole soul, him who made it.

Under this idea of sacrifice, Jesus is sometimes called the "Paschal Lamb." There is a true and beautiful sense in which this title may be well applied to him — for

"the Paschal Lamb was killed, and the blood sprinkled on the door posts, that the destroying angel might not enter in." So Jesus, in a forcible and touching figure, may be regarded as preserving his disciples from spiritual death. But taken literally, and in connection with this doctrine of Atonement, the application of the title to Jesus is very incorrect, for "the Paschal Lamb in Egypt was not to atone or expiate sins, nor was it a piacular sacrifice." And when the Passover was afterwards observed by the Israelites, it was in commemoration of their deliverance; on the same principle that Christians may now observe the rite of the Lord's supper.

As the Jewish sacrifices have been regarded as "typical of the sacrifice of Christ," a resemblance has been supposed to exist between Christ's bearing the sins of men and the offering made on the great day of Atonement among the Jews. This day was something similar to our annual Fast, that is, as a day of humiliation and prayer. A sacrifice was offered. Two goats were selected — one was killed, and on the other was laid the sins of the people, and he was suffered to escape into the wilderness. Which of these two did Christ resemble? It was the one that was presented alive before the Lord, that was to make the Atonement, and "to bear upon him all the iniquities of the people." But Jesus Christ was put to death. That holy death, like the holy life of which it was the finishing, was, indeed, designed to bear away our sins. Would that our hearts might be more deeply touched by the sacred meaning. Would that the death of the cross might be allowed to teach its sublime lesson, to make its affecting appeal, without being burdened by interpretations, which no more offend our reason than

they shock the best feelings of our nature. Since Jesus no more "bare our sins" to save the sinful from punishment, than he "bare our sicknesses" to save the sick from pain; for such "substitution" is, not only not required, but impossible in the perfect government of a righteous and merciful God.

Jesus Christ is called our redemption — not redeemer, this word not being found in the New Testament. But what are we to understand by redemption. We, surely, must not take this word in the literal signification. It means, simply, deliverance from slavery, or captivity, or punishment. The deliverance of the children of Israel from Egyptain bondage is called redemption. God is said to have redeemed them. But how? Was any equivalent rendered by God to the King of Egypt? Did he give to their oppressors a payment? Certainly not. The word is used figuratively. It is applied to saving from any calamity, or even fear. In this figurative sense is the word used to point out the benefits secured to men by Christ. Christ is no where represented as having redeemed us *from* God, but to have "redeemed us *to* God." "He gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of *good works*." This is true Christian redemption — not effected by the death of Christ alone, but in connexion with his teachings, revelations, life, leading us to repentance and obedience. "We are said to be saved, — is the remark of Taylor, — by faith, by works, by the word of God, by baptism, by grace, by the death of Christ, by his life, by the words of St. Peter, by the words of St. Paul, by the foolishness of preaching, by calling on the name of the Lord, by enduring unto the end, &c., by

all these causes singly, we are said to be saved, in the New Testament; and yet it is most certain, that not one of them must be so understood as to exclude the rest."

Jesus Christ is said to be a propitiation for our sins. This word propitiation occurs but three times in the New Testament, and once is a mistranslation of a Greek word, which signifies a mercy-seat, and is in the original a different word from that which in the other places is translated propitiation. The passage in which it is found declares to us the absolute offer of free mercy in God, "whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation — or mercy-seat." Now as the mercy-seat of the former dispensation was a "place of God's particular presence, the seat of merciful manifestations, the medium of communications between God and his people, from which God gave instructions to Moses for the benefit of the Israelites" — so Christ is the Gospel mercy-seat, the medium of intercourse between God and the world, in the new dispensation. From him God proclaims his love to men, and makes his merciful declaration of forgiveness and favor to the penitent offender. The original word of which "propitiation" is the correct translation, is found but twice in the New Testament. It is found, however, several times in the Greek version of the Old Testament, and these, though they furnish no doctrinal proof, may help to ascertain the meaning. In Psalms, "with Thee there is forgiveness." In Daniel, "to the Lord our God belong mercies and forgiveness." And in a yet more striking passage in Ecclesiasticus, "to depart from wickedness is a thing pleasing to the Lord, and to forsake unrighteousness is a propitiation." And these point us to the true interpretation. This was the propitiation Christ

came to effect; to declare the mercy and forgiveness of God, and by his life, and death, and all the circumstances of his divine mission, "to open their eyes and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God; that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified.

Jesus Christ is called, in three places, a ransom. And as, in its first sense, this word means a price paid for the redemption of a slave, it has been contended that the sufferings and death of Christ were a substitute for the punishment of sinners. But, surely, the literal interpretation is burdened with precisely the same difficulties we have already considered. Still, if any will contend for a literal ransom, I ask to whom it was paid. If there was a literal buyer, there must have been a literal seller. Shall it be said that this was God? What, were we ransomed from God? Or must we go back to the old notion, that men were the bond-slaves of the devil? Just so it is with the term purchased or bought — the question returns, from whom? And also of the two places where it is said "Ye are bought with a price." If we must talk of the death of Christ in the phrases of a bargain, we must say that there are three parties. The party bought, purchased, for whom the price is paid, that is, man, — the party who buys, purchases, or pays the price, that is Christ, — the party that sells or to whom the price is paid, and who is this? If any choose to believe that we are bought from God, I am very sorry for it. No! All these phrases are evidently figurative. Such as we, ourselves, use every day. We say our national liberty was bought with toil and blood. We have purchased wisdom by painful experience. Our virture has cost us struggles.

Such a one has paid for knowledge with the price of his life. We say this, and much more like this, without the least thought of an actual contract or bargain. No one hesitates, for a moment, in the interpretation of such expressions.

It is said that Christ was made a curse for us. This is wholly opposed to the notion of a sacrifice ; for, under the Jewish constitution, those things subject to a curse were represented as offensive in the sight of God, and were never suffered to be brought as an offering to his altar.

We hear of the satisfaction of Christ. This word is not found in the New Testament, and I may, therefore, be excused from considering it. As to the meaning which it is used to express, that is sufficiently considered in my other remarks.

We now come to that word which gives the name to this doctrine, — Atonement. Many who regard the Atonement as a prominent, distinctive, doctrine of the Gospel, may be surprised to learn that this word, instead of frequently occurring, is found but once in the New Testament; and in this single instance, is the translation of that original term, which is every where else rendered reconciliation. So that had our translators been consistent with themselves, the word Atonement would not have stood at all on the pages of the Christian Scriptures. This word, however, as it was used when our translation of the New Testament was made, was understood to mean no more than reconciliation. It is found among the old English writers, in the sense of agreement, concord. The word atone is composed of these two — at one — that is, to agree, to be reconciled. So that

when King James's translators used the word atonement, they, very evidently, considered it as having the same signification as the other word reconciliation. But after all, as there can be no special virtue in the word Atonement, the question is, what are we to understand by reconciliation. A general definition is — the removal of enmity, the putting an end to opposition, the restoring to amity and peace those who had been at variance. Gospel reconciliation, the bringing of men nigh unto God, is not effected by Christ having appeased the wrath of God. For, it is nowhere said in the Scriptures that Christ died to reconcile God to man, but always man to God. Reconciliation evidently intends change of feeling and intention in the one reconciled, and as God is without change it can only be man who is reconciled. Christ came not to increase the love of God to men, but to make it manifest; not to render God merciful, but to show that he is so; not to propitiate, but to prove that he is propitious. In the very passage where the word atonement is used for the only time, we are said to receive the atonement, not God — "We also joy in God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement." Men had corrupted themselves and thus became opposed to holiness. They were to be recovered from this opposition, this state of enmity. Christ came to effect this recovery, by his instructions, his example and also by his death. Because by his sufferings and the shedding of his blood, he confirmed the New Covenant, by which the Gentiles were brought nigh to God.

God is nowhere said to be reconciling the world to himself by Moses, or any of the ancient prophets, for their ministry related, solely, to one nation. But Jesus was

sent to be the Savior of the world — to be the reconciler, and restorer, of the whole human race; that is, to effect the removal of what excluded the Gentiles from the Church of God. Paul says, "For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life." Here the life of Christ is made even more efficacious than his death. Our reconciliation is also said to be effected by the Gospel; so that whatever is effected by the death of Christ, the same is effected by the Gospel which was confirmed by his death. It is, too, worthy of notice, that the same blood and cross of Christ are said to have put an end to the enmity between the Jews and Gentiles, and thus to have effected a reconciliation between them. And certainly there could not have been an atonement in such a case.

We can thus gather the real meaning of this word atonement or reconciliation, and how it is brought about by the coming of Christ. His kingdom, the reign of truth, and peace, and holiness, and righteousness, is thus extended and established in the world. The darkness of sin and superstition dispelled; men converted from the error of their ways, and brought, in heart and practice, to trust and obey the one true and living God. In this consists Gospel reconciliation. "God having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities." God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ; as though God did beseech you by us; we pray you in Christ's stead, Be ye reconciled to God."

Such is this doctrine of Atonement. And such is the character of the terms, expressions, passages, on which it is founded. This consideration and examination might easily be further extended. I am well aware that much more might be said; and profitably said; for unhappily, error, long established and widely spread, demands for its confutation, not a sermon but a volume. Still, I hope enough has been given, to prove that there is both Scripture and argument on the side of those, who feel themselves compelled to reject this doctrine of Atonement as not belonging to the true Gospel of Jesus Christ.

I would repeat it, on the Trinitarian scheme I do not see how any Atonement has been, or could be, offered. This scheme teaches "One God in three persons." Whatever is done by God, then, must be done by the whole; not the Father alone, nor the Son alone, nor the Spirit alone. The anger of God must be the anger of the three persons; and the satisfaction to that anger must be made by the Three to the Three. If Christ made the Atonement, then God made it. To whom did he make it — to himself? Can there be "divided and opposite sentiments" in the mind of God? These are difficult questions, but I am not called on to answer them.

The errors which stand out prominently in all statements made of this doctrine of Atonement, by those who receive and support it, and which infect all their reasonings and explanations, are these — wrong views of what is called God's sovereignty, and the true objects of the divine government — giving a literal interpretation to that which is metaphorical, and regarding figures, not as impressive illustrations, but accurate definitions of truth — considering the death of Christ separate from his life

and character — viewing Christ as the representative of man, and suffering the pains and penalties to which he is thought to have been liable, instead of being the representative of God, and sent by him to enlighten, purify and save mankind.

There are some kindred interpretations of this doctrine which differ from the views already considered, chiefly in the extent that they give to the efficacy of the Atonement. Some allowing that to all men, which others confine to the elect. But just so far as these retain the false principle of "substitution," requiring an innocent person to suffer that the guilty may go free, so far are they opposed to the true character of God, and the real design of the Gospel. It matters little what phraseology may be employed, whether the death of Christ be viewed in the light of a "satisfaction," or only as a display of God's "hatred of sin." The error may be less open, but it is still error.

I have hardly left myself space or time for stating, at the length I intended, the real design of the death of Christ. Unitarians have been strangely and sadly misunderstood on this point. They have been represented as believing that Jesus died only as a martyr and witness to the truth of his Gospel; and as relying on their own merits as the sole ground of acceptance with God. Statements as incorrect as they could well be. Their chosen reliance is on the mercy of God, the free, unpurchased, unlimited mercy of God; and not on what they conscientiously believe to be an unscriptural doctrine. And if they do not speak of the character, life, sufferings and death of Christ, in terms the most affectionate, grateful and exalted, then I do not know the meaning of language.

They do not regard the sufferings and death of Christ

as a punishment, simply for this reason, that the sufferings of an innocent being never can be punishment. When any one suffers in doing his duty or in rendering kindness to others, he cannot be said to be punished. Suffering may be inflicted on a righteous man, and he may consent to endure it for another's good. But who can call this punishment, unless we make benevolence a crime. Authority punishes for the fault; law punishes for the transgression. But Jesus, the righteous, the beneficent, the undefiled, who shall so misname his labors and his agony as to call them punishment! No; Jesus Christ did indeed suffer, but for reasons stated in the Scriptures. "Though he were a son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered." "For in that he himself suffered, being tempted, he is able to succor them that are tempted." "For it became Him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through suffering." "Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps." "Thus it behoved Christ to suffer, that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations." May such ever be the preaching of the Gospel teacher. Let the holy connection of repentance and remission of sins never be lost sight of — since, to communicate this truth, and to give this encouragement, Christ both lived, and died, and rose again.

The death of Christ was necessary for the fulfilment of the great design of his divine mission; and an essential part of the Gospel scheme which offers pardon and salvation unto men. All Christians agree as to the importance

of this solemn event, however widely they may differ on the question — how the death of Christ is a means of salvation. Still, all who read the Gospel record, and reflect upon the circumstances in which our Savior was placed, and the character of the Jews in his time, must be satisfied that such death was unavoidable. There have been only four ways stated in which Jesus could have escaped death. "By falling in with the wishes of the Jews, and becoming their temporal Messiah — by gradually instilling into the minds of his countrymen just views, and withholding unwelcome truths — by hiding himself in a retired or secret place — by employing his miraculous powers to effect his escape." Every one of these is plainly inconsistent with the known character of Jesus, and the great purposes of his mission. No. His death was unavoidable, and it was perfectly voluntary. Herein was one of the most holy and beautiful manifestations of Christ. For, though he knew from the beginning what would be his sufferings and death, not a word did he withhold, not a step did he turn aside from his path, to escape the treachery, the judgment seat, the cross. Suppose a preacher of simple, rational Christianity, had appeared in Spain in the dark days when the Inquisition was in full, uncontrolled power; how long a period would have elapsed before he would have been immured in a dungeon or burnt at the stake? Were the Jewish priests less malicious and persecuting than those of a later day?

Christ died to give the highest ground of assurance of God's love to men. "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son." "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us." "In this was manifested the love of God towards us, because that God sent

his only begotten son into the world that we might live through him." These, and many more like passages with which the New Testament abounds, plainly show that Jesus Christ, in his coming, life and death, was a consequence and not a cause of the love of God to men.

Christ died to break down "the middle wall of partition," which separated Jew from Gentile, "to make both one, that he might reconcile both unto God." The former dispensation by Moses was limited to one people; the Gospel by Christ is for all — to bring all into "one fold."

The great design and end of the death of Christ is that which he states himself, "I lay down my life that I may take it again — therefore doth my Father love me." Or, as the Apostle has expressed it, "Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death and hath brought life and immortality to light." By his death and the miracle of his consequent resurrection, he confirmed his assurance of a future life, and so established the great doctrine of man's immortality. A doctrine which the world had been hoping for and praying for, but which had never been made known, even to that people to whom was given the great truth of one only true and living God. Upon this fact is founded the Gospel. "If Christ be not risen," says Paul, "then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain." "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ," says Peter, "who, according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." Christ died that he might rise again; and because he rose, we believe in him — and feel that our faith and hope is not "in vain."

Most freely, thankfully, and devoutly do we, as Unita-

rians, receive all that we find the Scriptures teach us concerning this important event, — the death of Christ, and the great, glorious, and merciful ends effected by it.

We believe that grace and truth came by Jesus Christ, grace and truth in the highest and best sense. As Jesus himself said — "to this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth." And most fervently do we adore the free grace of God, which gave the Gospel with its revelations, instructions, promises, sanctions and hopes; which gave, too, Jesus Christ with his life, death, resurrection and ascension.

We believe that Jesus Christ saves us by his life, by his death, by all he did, taught, suffered, established. And that "him hath God exalted to be a Prince and a Savior, for to give repentance — and forgiveness of sins." "Thou shalt call his name Jesus: for he shall save his people — not from the wrath of God, but — from their sins."

We believe that Jesus Christ gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity; to raise us from the death of sin to the life of righteousness. And not that a life of righteousness is made unnecessary by a "covenanted sacrifice." That he redeems us from our "vain conversation;" not by the removal of any external obstacle in the way of human salvation — since there never was such obstacle — but by removing the great hindrance, that is, the evil that lies in man's own breast.

We believe that Jesus Christ offered himself to God. Not as a guilty substitute, but that "he offered himself without spot to God," to lead us "to purge our consciences from dead works to serve the living God." And they

who are thus led are saved. It is not leaning on Christ the substitute, but following Christ the example, that obtains salvation.

We believe that the death of Christ was, indeed, a sacrifice, in a beautiful and affecting sense. To offer himself up, as Jesus did, in the holy cause of truth and goodness; and in so dying, to exhibit an example of patient suffering for the salvation of men; thus to afford proof of the divinity of his mission, and in this way to establish a doctrine by which sinners may be brought nigh unto God, — this we consider sacrifice in its highest and fullest meaning. A sacrifice of love, not of anger. And we readily admit the obligation which rests on all believers in Christ, "to present their bodies as living sacrifices, holy, acceptable, unto God, which is their reasonable service."

We do believe that Christ suffered for us through toil and exposure, in the midst of ignorance and malice, misconception and deadly hatred. And that he suffered all that was "necessary to redeem us" from the influences of sin; to awaken us to penitence, to lead us to reformation, and to prepare us for the divine pardon and final acceptance.

We do believe that Christ died for us. And that he did so from motives of the most divine benevolence; as he himself said, "greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." Nay more — as Paul said, "for scarcely for a righteous man will one die; but God commendeth his love towards us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." And, says the Apostle John, "we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren." Truly and gloriously does that man imitate

the example of Jesus Christ, who spends his strength, his time, his means, his life, for the benefit of his fellow-beings. "Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind." He, who baptised with the same spirit of love, drinks of the same cup of suffering, shall be made partaker of the same glory.

We do believe, finally, that we are bought with a price. But no price of substituted suffering. No price of atoning blood. No price of an innocent victim offered up instead of the guilty to appease an angry God. Oh no! The price we are bought with, is — our existence and the many comforts and possessions that make it a blessing. The body and spirit with which we are to glorify God. Our health; the food that nourishes; the garments that clothe; the habitations that protect. The countless mercies that come with every moment of life. The protection of our past days; the trust with which we may look forward to the future. The bounties of nature, the truths of Revelation. The sources of instruction and happiness every where opened around us. A world filled with gladness. The earth that bears us, with its abounding fertility. The sky above us, with its brightness, its blessed light, its sheltering darkness, its invigorating airs. Our own home, with its quiet peace, its beaming faces, and confiding hearts, and welcoming voices. The religion which teaches us to see in all these the provisions of a heavenly bounty, the manifestations of a divine love: to see, beyond these many blessings that we cannot number, an opening heaven of established truth, and ever-increasing happiness. This is the price which God pays us for our love and service. These are

the gifts with which the heavenly Father would win his children to be faithful to themselves.

Let us bring in no corruption of religion to animate us to obedience. Let us not imagine, for a moment, that another being has bought for us, from our God, the blessings we enjoy — that the heavenly parent sells, not gives, his mercies to his children. Freely has he bestowed; freely have we received; freely let us obey. Not by imputed, but by personal holiness; not by the merits of another, but by our own humble and earnest efforts; by purity of heart, by uprightness of life, let us offer our daily sacrifice unto God. Let us permit Jesus Christ and his Gospel, his example and his instructions, his life and his death, to redeem us from every thing that renders man unworthy of "the manifold grace of God." Let us be Christians, by an enlightened faith of the mind; by a sanctifying faith of the heart; by a glad and patient devotedness of the life. Loving one another. Doing good to one another. Filled and directed, through all time and all circumstances, by a true and deep-felt love to God our heavenly father. For of him, and through him, and to him, are ALL THINGS; to whom be glory forever.

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UNITARIANISM,

A

DEVOTIONAL FAITH.

BY REV. J. SCOTT PORTER,
OF BELFAST, IRELAND.

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UNITARIANISM—A DEVOTIONAL FAITH.

That Christianity, in its genuine state, is calculated to foster the spirit of devotion, will readily be conceded by every one who professes to be a Christian. Indeed, the necessity of piety is so evident, that no one could reasonably adopt a faith which appeared to neglect the inculcation of a duty so important. All Christians, therefore, believe that Christianity is a Devotional Faith. It is my object, in the present lecture, to show, that the system of Christian Unitarianism possesses, in an eminent degree, this admitted characteristic of the pure Gospel; and that it thus exhibits, in its own nature and tendency, a strong, though indirect proof, of its claim to be regarded as the unadulterated faith which was taught by our Lord Jesus Christ.

In handling this subject, and some others of a similar nature, which I propose to consider in future lectures, I disavow all wish to institute any comparison between the actual conduct of those who have embraced Unitarianism, and those who adhere to the more popular modes of belief. Such a comparison would tend to inflate with pride the minds of those whose conduct might obtain the pref-

erence, and thus render them less careful in their behaviour, — less desirous of improvement, — less anxious to amend their errors, and supply their deficiencies. It might offend and mortify those who might be marked out as inferior to their brethren; but could hardly tend to make them better. I disclaim, therefore, any such comparison. I admit, that there are many men whose lives adorn what I regard as an erroneous creed; and, I am obliged to own, there are some whose conduct disgraces the profession of a sound one. I do not admit, indeed, that Unitarians generally, are inferior to their fellow-christians around them in moral and religious character: but, for the reasons already stated, I refuse to give the preference to either party. I know that there are, in the case of every man living, many circumstances which modify or counteract the tendency of the creed which he professes. I know that a vast multitude of influences, besides his doctrinal creed, are continually at work, to form and establish the character of his mind. I am willing to allow their proper and just weight to all such considerations, in estimating the character of my fellow-christians. I beg distinctly to be understood as not imputing to individual men, many of whom I know to be most exemplary and praiseworthy, those immoral and irreligious effects which I regard as the natural consequences of their system of belief. I speak of the system only, not the men who hold it. I do not assert, that every Unitarian exemplifies the graces which I think to be the natural fruits of Unitarianism; much less do I charge every Calvinist with those vices which I look upon as the natural effects of Calvinism. But, in relation to the systems themselves, it is obvious, that their moral in-

fluence and natural results, such as they would display themselves — if unchecked and uncounteracted — may be a very strong ground for preference or rejection ; and, accordingly, it is necessary to examine them in this point of view.

In considering the relative influence of Unitarianism, and what is commonly called Orthodoxy, in fostering a devotional spirit, it is needful to set out with just ideas of the real nature of genuine devotion. It is obvious, that mere sincerity is not sufficient to stamp upon any form of worship the impress denoting the highest value and importance. The Mahometan nations are perfectly sincere in their religious faith; and yet we do not regard their worship as equally pure with that which our Lord taught his disciples to cherish. Neither can we allow, that the most intense fervor of piety, or the most exalted emotions of ecstasy, are an indubitable proof of the acceptableness of the devotion in which they are displayed. The victims of the Hindoo Juggernaut display the utmost warmth and fervor of piety ; and yet we cannot believe their worship to be equally honorable to God, or agreeable to his will, or pleasing in his sight, with that of Christians under the Gospel. Sincerity and fervor, therefore, though both are necessary, are not sufficient to distinguish the pure and sublime devotion which the Father of Spirits desires. Worship — to be in the highest degree pleasing unto him — must be founded on a just knowledge of his attributes and character; guided and controlled by reason; influencing the heart and life ; and inspiring such feelings, and dictating such conduct, as the Author of our being approves and loves. Such is the highest and purest form of devotion. Such was the de-

votion of Christ, our Lord, himself. Such was the devotion which he recommended and taught; and such, I proceed to show, is — in a peculiar degree — the devotion which Christian Unitarianism inspires and prompts. My object is to prove, that of all the known forms in which the Christian doctrine has been preached, there is none which is so well fitted to produce this most beneficial moral effect. There is, indeed, no view of Christianity in which there is not much good, and much that is calculated to foster the spirit of piety; but, in most of them, other principles are mixed up which impair their practical efficacy, and produce more or less of danger to the character of its professors. In Unitarianism, alone do I find a system of truths which appears to me calculated to inspire a pure, a steadfast, and an enlightened devotion.

In this discourse, I shall use the term Unitarianism to designate not a doctrine, but a system; as including not merely the fundamental truth — that God is One, — but likewise those other important truths which are usually, I might say universally, associated with this great principle. By Unitarianism, I mean the view of the Christian religion which teaches us, that there is One God, the Father; who alone is God: — and One Lord Jesus Christ, his Son, Prophet, and Messenger; — that we and our brethren of mankind are placed in this world in a state of trial and discipline, to prepare for a better; — that we are furnished by our merciful Creator with full powers and motives to enable us to fulfil all the duties which are required for our future acceptance; — that the sincere penitent will receive pardon; — and that no one will be excluded from mercy in consequence of any other

thing but his own actual guilt and misconduct. In short, that men will be judged hereafter in justice and mercy, but strictly according to their deeds; — that every one shall give account of himself, and only of himself. These are distinctive features of that faith which I have in view when speaking of the influences of Unitarianism.

I proceed, therefore, to illustrate the natural and necessary effect of this form of faith on those who sincerely and consistently profess it, with reference to their religious feelings and conduct.

Unitarianism is eminently calculated to produce and sustain the spirit of devotion; because it presents to the mind one distinct and intelligible Being, as the object of devotion. Piety requires a definite and well understood object. We cannot exert our devotional feelings with their due and full fervor, if we consider them as referring to a multitude of Beings at once. In this case our pious sentiments are lost in the crowd. Neither can we be devout, or at least as devout as we ought to be, and are capable of being, if we bow down before a Being, of whom we have formed to ourselves a representation which perplexes, confuses, and bewilders our understandings, so that we can neither tell our souls of what kind he is, nor form of him any conception whatsoever. The worship which is presented to an unknown and incomprehensible God, can never rise to the energy and sublimity of a hearty homage. Now Unitarianism exactly meets this want of the human mind for a distinct and intelligible object of devotion. It presents to us One God, the Father — the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ — the Father of all — as the only living and true God. It teaches, that he alone is the Being who is to be worship-

ped and adored ; — that no other person, no other being, no other subsistence, is to share with him in the affections of our hearts. The views which our system exhibits of his nature are calculated, by their admirable simplicity, to fix the wandering thoughts, and give our souls a resting place. For it teaches us to approach him as truly and strictly *One ;* one in every sense ; one person, one being, one substance only ; as strictly and properly *one* as each of ourselves is. It does not require us to attempt to form to ourselves conceptions which involve either mysteries unfathomable, or contradictions irreconcilable. Here, then, we have a Being whom our minds can grasp ; — whom our thoughts can conceive ; — on whom our hearts can fix their warmest and most intense affections ; — to whom our souls can aspire in the fervor and ardor of devotion ; — and on whom they can rest in the full power of the spirit of prayer. If, therefore, the Unitarian be not devout, he belies his own principles ; he is untrue to himself ; for never was there a religion better fitted to form and strengthen the devotional habit than that which he professes.

It can hardly be necessary to point out the pre-eminent advantage which the Unitarian system possesses in this respect over the more common, but infinitely less intelligible doctrine, professed by our Fellow-Christians of other creeds. They have for their object of worship, not one, but three divine persons, who sustain all personal relations towards one another, and towards mankind. One begets another ; but is not himself begotten ; — one sends the other two ; but is not himself sent by them ; — one proceeds from the other two ; but does not himself give origin to any one else. They love each other ; — they

make covenants or agreements with each other; — they receive gifts from each other; — they intercede with each other; — they satisfy each other's justice, and comply with each other's will. Now I ask, in the name of all that is consistent and intelligible, are not these three persons — so related, and so acting, distinctly and separately — are they not, to all intents and purposes, *Three Gods?* And if the acute minds of metaphysicians, in their abstract studies, can find a means of reconciling all this with the One-ness of God — at least to their own satisfaction — can such considerations influence the mind of the penitent in the hour of prayer? Can they come home to the spirit of the *child*, which prays according to its catechism or creed?

Nor is the case improved by those subtleties and distinctions to which some theologians have recourse, for giving to the mind one object of devotion instead of the three which their creed would appear to countenance. They tell us, as we have already seen, that in their formulas they speak, it is true, of three persons, each of whom is God; but then, they add, they do not use the word person in its common signification, nor is it exactly fitted to express the relation which the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, bear to each other. They use it, therefore, only for want of a better term; and they profess themselves unable to give any definition whatsoever of the meaning of the word in this application. Thus it appears that the Three Persons are not Three Persons. Some have proposed to call them three Subsistences: three Subsistences in One God: some would have us say, three Distinctions in the One God; some call them three Somewhats. Now what can be the influence and power

of the devotional feelings in the soul of man, when he bows down in adoration before three *Distinctions*? One can hardly frame a prayer in which the epithet of *Somewhat* should be introduced, without appearing to cast ridicule on the whole subject; but if any one will substitute the phrase *Three Somewhats* for that of *Three Persons*, in that formula, "O Holy, Blessed, and Glorious Trinity, Three Persons and One God," he will speedily perceive that the words are calculated to give rise to any feelings except those of devotion. Now all such notions, however expressed, however explained, are calculated to perplex, confuse, and mystify. They darken counsel by words without knowledge. They leave the mind without any precise or definite idea on which it can fix; and to them the bewildered worshipper might apply the language of Mary Magdalene in the garden, — "*They have taken away our Lord, and we know not where they have laid him.*" Most certainly the Unitarian is justified in addressing to those who entertain these perplexed and mysterious notions of the Godhead, — "*Ye worship ye know not what; we know what we worship.*" It surely can require no argument to show which of these two systems is better calculated to inspire a deep-seated, rational, and serious piety.

There is another point of view in which this influence of Unitarianism, in favor of devotion, is not less conspicuous. We know that the purity and elevation of the devotional feeling must greatly depend on the views which are taken of the spirituality of the Being who is addressed in prayer. "*God is a spirit;*" and it is only by those who so regard him that he can be worshipped "*in spirit and in truth.*" Now Unitarianism holds fast by this sim-

ple tenet, of God's spirituality. It keeps it inviolate; it involves no doctrine which tends either to obscure or to contradict this fundamental principle. God, according to it, is an infinite, all-pervading mind; without bodily parts, passions, or affections; incapable of pain, of suffering, or of change; infinitely removed from all those grosser feelings and humiliating sensations which are connected with the possession of a bodily frame. Such a pure and spiritual Deity is well calculated to call forth a pure and spiritual worship. But I think I might appeal, without much apprehension, to the fair and candid among Trinitarians themselves,— whether there are not, in their doctrine, some things which tend, at least, to weaken and perplex this conviction of the pure and perfect spirituality of the Supreme Being. When they tell us that their God did, in the process of time, take flesh, and assume to himself man's nature; so that two whole and entire natures of God and man are united in one person forever; and when they address this object of adoration, by solemn appeals to his sufferings, death, and resurrection; his fasting, baptism, and temptation; his agony and bloody sweat; — do we not say with truth that their creed is producing its legitimate effects, and that it has seduced them unknowingly into the worship of one made like unto themselves? Here they are following one of the strong impulses of nature; for frail man has ever sought after a human object of religious adoration. Hence the heroes and demigods of antiquity; and hence, also, the worship paid to the Virgin and the Saints in the Roman Catholic Church. But, though this be one of the strong tendencies of humanity, it is one of the inferior among them, which reason and revelation were given to

us to control and guide. Nor can there be any doubt that adoration paid to such a Being must of necessity be inferior, in spirituality and in power, to that which is addressed to God alone, as a pure, incorporeal being. This latter is the devotion of Unitarians. In this respect, our system stands among the Christian sects unrivalled and alone.

There is still a third point, in which I discern the superiority of Unitarianism, as a devotional system. It accords with the teachings of nature. It brings the world of creation, and that of redemption, into complete harmony. It views them both as bearing a united and perfectly accordant testimony regarding the Great Being who is the common author of both. Nor is this of trifling importance. In our frail and imperfect state we have need of every help to awaken and keep alive our devout feelings. Often do such sentiments arise within the soul, from the contemplation of some of the external works of the Most High God. A glance at the starry heavens will, to the soul inspired by contemplation, suggest more themes of adoration and of awe for the Omnipotent Creator and Ruler, than could be called forth by a thousand sermons. A plant, a flower, an insect, may suggest ideas which speak more truly and forcibly to the heart than any words from the lips of man. Indeed, as every mind has its own peculiar method of observation and of reasoning, the diversities of form in which these pious considerations may present themselves are absolutely endless. It is of the utmost consequence to beings such as we are, and situated as we are, that these precious hints should be seized, detained, dwelt upon, and treasured up. It is of great importance that the most should be made of

them — that none of them should be permitted to pass us by until it has paid to us its tribute of instruction and delight. Thus will the habit be formed of looking to God, and living in God, — seeing God in all things, and all things in God : — nor can any habit be more conducive to the formation of deep, and tranquil, and affectionate sentiments of piety and devotion. But the Unitarian alone can possess this advantage in its proper measure; because he alone entertains those ideas, both of the works and word of God, by which they are caused to blend their voices in concert, and mutually aid each other's power. For, whatever has been argued with respect to the Book of Revelation, it has never been denied that the Book of Nature is Unitarian. If the heavens declare the glory of God, they declare the glory of but One God — if the firmament showeth his handiwork, it showeth the handiwork of none but one. It says nothing of a Trinity in Unity, or Unity in Trinity. It affords no basis for devotion directed to such an object. The votary of nature may be a devout Trinitarian ; but his devotion is not of nature's teaching, forming, or strengthening ; — from that source it can derive no aid. To him Nature and Revelation speak in different languages, if they do not directly contradict each other ; and it requires the utmost exertion of theologic skill to bring their declarations into accordance. Here then the Unitarian derives increase and confirmation of his devotional feelings from that which always must, to men of other creeds, tend more or less to draw away their minds and hearts from what are to them the only principles of true and real piety. It is not in this instance alone that Unitarianism and Nature are in agreement, where, between nature and religion, or

other systems, there is war. Thus, there are creeds which tell us, that all the virtues and graces which can be displayed before the eyes of men,—the warm love of the parent to the child, and the child to the parent, the noble spirit of the patriot, the self-devotion of the philanthropist, the enduring affection which can watch and tend its object, and wear the frame away in the anxious endeavor to mitigate pain,—the purity that can spurn the most tempting object of worldly desire, when incompatible with virtue and honor, and can submit to loss and shame and degradation, rather than forfeit self-esteem, or wound the conscience,—there are creeds which tell us, that all these are perfectly compatible with hearts unrenewed, and with a character and condition in which the Almighty can find nothing to approve and nothing to love: a character which is only a mass of corruption, and which can give rise to nothing but evil. This is contrary to the teachings of nature. The soul instinctively repels and banishes the idea. It is the creed of the book, sometimes the conviction of the head, but it never is the persuasion of the heart. But I confine the observation of the harmony between nature and Unitarian Christianity to their tendency to promote and strengthen a devotional spirit; because, in this respect, their agreement is most conspicuous, and the superiority possessed by Unitarianism over every other form of the Christian religion is, in this point of view, not only the most striking, but the most important.

Again,—The character of the Supreme Being, as represented by Unitarianism, is more fitted to produce piety and encourage prayer than any other view which has been taken of it. It represents him as loving all his

children. All are, without exception, objects of regard and favor to him. None are outcasts from his mercy. None has he doomed to everlasting destruction, by a decree irrevocable and irresistible, issued millions of ages before they saw the light. There is not one among them all whose prayer he is not willing to receive, and does not most gladly hear. In short, according to Unitarianism, as according to the Scriptures, his love is universal,— he is himself pure benevolence: — God is love. To such a Being, the humble, the penitent, the contrite, can approach; they can bow themselves before the throne of grace on which is seated a God who is the father and the friend of all,— *their* father and their friend, notwithstanding all their wanderings and imperfections. To such a God, the spirit of the benevolent man, who has been actively engaged in works and labors of love, can draw near with confidence and joy. To such a God may the holy and the pious, who have labored in the cause of mankind, approach in prayer, and feel that they are pouring out their supplications for the blessing of heaven upon their plans of usefulness, into the ears of one who is ready to hear them when they pray. To such a God, may the child of frailty turn, and weep forth the expression of repentance, and plead for pity and forgiveness, pleading as to the heart of a father. But there is something in the harsh, and stern, and unrelenting character which other creeds ascribe to the Deity, that represses and discourages devotion. How can the feelings of the soul flow forth in love to a Deity who is represented as having doomed millions of helpless creatures to inevitable destruction from all eternity, not for any thing they had done or were to do, but purely for his own glory? How

can the heart take delight in approaching a Being who is strict to mark, and inexorable to punish, every offence which even the best of men may commit against him: who never has forgiven, and never will forgive, a single sin — unless a full equivalent be paid? — who, rather than remit one iota of the total amount of punishment which a portion of his creatures had incurred, chose to lay the punishment of the guilty upon the innocent, by erecting a cross on Calvary, on which he caused the only Being who never had offended him, to be nailed, until he expired in agony, and who only remitted the sentence against others in consequence of his agonies and anguish? — nay, who yet refuses to accept a large portion of his children into his favor, although he has received an infinite satisfaction, an ample equivalent for the sins of all, as well as of the chosen few? Nothing can be to me more plain, than that these opinions, so far as their influence extends, must tend to damp and chill the ardor of piety. It is impossible, on any known principles of human nature, that these views should beget love to God. They are, in fact, scarcely compatible with it. The persons who hold them may love their God, and many of them do, from the influence of habit, education, and natural feeling; but I cannot see how they could possibly do so, from the mere effect and influence of their creed.

The last consideration I shall mention is, the advantage of Unitarianism over other creeds in a religious point of view,— owing to the unrivalled supremacy in our hearts and affections which our system claims for the Deity; and which undoubtedly is due to him, if our system be received as correct. According to the Unitarian

doctrine, God is himself the Author of all the benefits we have received through the Gospel, and to him alone our gratitude is due. It required no external act or agent or inducement to prevail on him to take us into favor. The Son is but the gift and token of his love. But, according to other views, it was the Son who, by undertaking the painful and dangerous office which he fulfilled, prevailed on the Father to suspend his vengeance, and receive his children once more into favor. Now, without going into particulars, I think it is manifest, that this representation — which we contend is unscriptural and unfair — tends to withdraw our affections from the Father of all, who is represented as the depository of inflexible vigor, and to transfer them to the innocent and benevolent Being who has kindly pleased to interfere on our behalf? "As in water face answereth to face, so doth the heart of man to his brother." This principle is of universal application. When, therefore, God is depicted to us with a forbidding air and a frowning face — while Jesus is portrayed with features expressive only of tenderness, sympathy, and compassion, it would be strange indeed, if our hearts' affections did not attach themselves to the Saviour; while we reserved only for our God, the sentiments of awe, suspicion, and abject dread! But what a dangerous and perverted state of mind is this? and who can doubt, even after this brief review, which of the two systems is more favorable to real and genuine, deeply-seated, and abiding piety?

I have already guarded myself against being supposed to assert that my Orthodox fellow-christians are destitute of the spirit of devotion, because their creed appears to

me ill calculated to give rise to such a frame of mind. I allow that there are many truly pious men among them. I am not speaking of them, but of their creed and of its tendencies. I think it is self-evident, that the spirit of the worship, which that creed dictates and inspires, will be the spirit of fear — which hath torment; and not the spirit of fervent affection and trustful love. Now, the devotion of love may, and must be regarded, as a more pure and elevated exercise of the heart than the worship which is characterized by terror and dread. In the one case, the worshipper approaches the Deity like a slave crouching and trembling in the presence of a despot; in the other, he comes to his God, as a child that casts himself into the opened arms of a father who loves him, and whom he loves. Can it require any argument to show which is the devotion of the New Testament,— which was the devotion of our Lord Jesus Christ?

Unitarianism is sometimes condemned by those who do not understand its nature — and have never imbibed its spirit — as an undevout system of religion. Never was there a more palpable misconception. It is eminently favorable to the feelings of piety. It is calculated to plant them deeply and permanently in the heart. It is pre-eminently a Devotional Faith.

Let all persons, both the friends and the opponents of our system, consider well its influence and tendency in this respect. If this be fairly and impartially done, much of the prejudice entertained against our faith will be abated; and the excellence of our religion will be so apparent, that it will even serve for a subsidiary argument of its truth.

But I am especially desirous of pressing this subject upon the attention of those who profess the Unitarian doctrine. Of all the forms in which Christianity has been presented to mankind, Unitarianism is the most favorable to the cultivation of the devotional feelings. You, my Unitarian brethren, are therefore especially called on to cherish the habit of devotion. Let the thought of God be ever present in your minds. Accustom yourselves to behold his wisdom, and his goodness in all his stupendous works around you; and to trace his love in the various events and vicissitudes of your own lives. Form and strengthen the habit of devout contemplation; and let the pious feelings of your souls find appropriate expression in the various acts and exercises of devotion. Above all, let me impress upon you the vast importance of private, family, and public prayer; as a means of cherishing and testifying the sentiments of love, veneration, and cheerful submission to the Father of your spirits, which his glorious attributes are calculated to inspire, and which his unnumbered mercies towards yourselves must naturally call forth. Many of your predecessors in the faith were men eminent for the graces of a devout heart and life; and you may be well assured, that you can take no more effectual means of promoting that holy cause, which was so dear to them, than by cultivating the pure and heavenly spirit of habitual devotion. Let your brethren around you see that the religious system which you profess, from its actual effects, as well as in its own nature, is truly a Devotional Faith. Let the light of your piety so "shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in

heaven." Besides the advantage of such a spirit to yourselves and to your families, your example would produce much benefit to your brethren of mankind; and would powerfully recommend your doctrinal views to those of your fellow-christians, whose approbation you would be most desirous of securing.

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THE COMING OF CHRIST.

BY REV. A. P. PEABODY.

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THE COMING OF CHRIST.

Luke vii. 19.

"Art thou he that should come? or look we for another?"

There is, to my mind, something surpassingly grand and beautiful in this portion of sacred writ. It has a deep significancy, and is as full of meaning to us at the present day, as it was to the Baptist. John, though he had foretold the Messiah's advent, had very low and imperfect notions of his kingdom. He supposed, that he would have come in outward pomp, in robes of power and state, at the head of conquering hosts. In the gloom of imprisonment, his faith in Jesus as the Messiah had grown dim. He asked for some surer token, some more resplendent sign, than had been given. He felt, that, if Jesus were indeed the promised Savior, he was dallying on his career, wasting golden moments, and ungratefully leaving his faithful precursor to the horrors of a dungeon and the peril of a violent death. John therefore sent two of his disciples, in the double hope, no doubt, of hearing somewhat that might confirm his own faith, and also of hastening the movements of Jesus towards victory and empire, if he were the true Messiah. Jesus makes no direct verbal reply; but acts an answer full of eloquence. Surrounded by the sick, and blind, and distracted, whom

the rumor of his wondrous cures had brought from all the country round about, he heals this wretched multitude in the presence of John's disciples, and then commands them to go and tell John what they had seen and heard, thus tacitly saying to his forerunner: "One has come, who lifts off men's burdens and rolls away their infirmities, who cures the evils and dispels the sorrows of mortality, who bids disease begone, and snatches the prey from the grave, who comforts the mourners, and proclaims glad news to the poor. Whom else, what more would you have? What seals of office could one bear more worthy of God, more manifest to man? Is not a healer of the griefs and ills of life *he that should come?*—the very Messiah that was needed? Why then *look for another?* Why look for pomp and glitter, the sound of trumpet and the clash of arms, when love, which is holier and greater than these, has become incarnate, and is working its miracles among the lowly and desolate? Why *look for another*, when the poor and the outcast have found a sympathy and kindness unknown before, when man, as man, has had shed upon him those rays of compassionate fellow-feeling, for which ever since the creation he has been yearning in vain?" The idea of this answer of our Savior is, that, *wherever love is at work, there he, who should come, has come*,— that in whatever company of believers, in whatever soul, there is love unfeigned and undefiled, to those believers, to that soul are fulfilled the words of the herald angel to the shepherds,— "Unto you is born a Savior, which is Christ the Lord." I shall now endeavor to expand and illustrate this idea.

1. I would take with an infidel the same course, which Jesus took to revive John's faltering faith. I would first

survey with my unbelieving friend the institutions and customs of Paganism. I would show him those lands of darkness and of the shadow of death, where the wounds of humanity are left to bleed unrelieved and unpitied. I would take him from scene to scene of desolation and woe, over which brooded no angel of peace, and whispered no breathing of consolation. I would show him the victim of pestilence cast out by his own kindred, breathing his last alone and unthought of. I would show him the prisoner languishing in hopeless durance, — the poor man trodden in the dust, his home a kennel, his children slaves. I would take him to the new made grave and the house of death, and let him see how full of desolation and despair are the sorrows of bereavement, when not cheered by the dawning of a filial faith and a heavenly hope. And then I would lead the unbeliever through Christendom, and show him there a balm for all men's wounds. I would take him into the dungeons and pest-houses of the old world, and show him the Christian philanthropist thrusting himself into the very heart of peril, that he may carry the healing cup, the pledge of sympathy, the bread of life to those sick and in prison. I would bid him walk through the still streets, which have been swept by the swift pestilence, and there see, as the frequent corpse is borne forth, the sisters of charity and the ministers of the cross, women tenderly nurtured, men of commanding powers and gifts, hurrying undaunted from one death-bed to another, discharging at once the most menial and the most holy offices, breathing in contagion, exposing themselves to a thousand deaths, that they may soothe the last hours, and point to heaven the departing spirits of those, with whom a common nature is their only tie. I would

show him the hospitals, the orphan asylums, the houses of reformation, which are seen nowhere but on Christian soil. I would bid him mark how Christian charity has taken the poor by the hand of cordial brotherhood, has gathered the little ones of ignorance and want into the fold of Jesus, and opened the door of mercy and of hope to the outcast victims of depravity. I would carry him to the maniacs' chapel on some Sabbath morning, and show him there the hundreds redeemed from straw, and chains, and filth, sitting, like him of old, at the feet of Jesus, clothed, and, to human appearance, in their right mind, listening earnestly to the soothing accents of Christian love, uniting devoutly in prayer, and lifting in faultless melody their songs of praise to him, who commands the light to shine out of darkness. I would carry him too to the Christian death-bed and house of mourning, and there teach him what peace and triumph the gospel can shed over the closing scene, how calmly and hopefully survivors sorrow for those that sleep in Jesus. I would trace back for him every source of consolation and joy, till I reached the gospel fountain, where it took its birth. I would show him that humanity has not a want, not a sorrow, which Jesus does not meet, not a dark passage in life, which he does not make fragrant with praise and love. I would thus hold forth Christianity as the great alms-giver, burden-bearer, and peace-maker of our race. I would show him how deeply humanity needed such a faith, how full and earnest is the sympathy of the great toiling and suffering body of humanity with it. And then I would ask him whether, if heaven indeed be gracious, such a Prince and Savior should not have come. Can we look at God's throne of love, and believe that he would have left his

children unaided in their conflict with guilt and woe? Can we trace the healing streams, that flow from Christ to make glad the city of our God, without feeling that they flow from the throne of everlasting love? No. Such is indeed the Savior, who, man's wants tell us, *should come*, nor can the fair and honest seeker *look for another*.

2. Again, in Christendom, among rival sects and conflicting creeds, we may know where Christ is by the same signs. And especially, we may thus ascertain, whether he is in *our* midst, or whether we have taken away our Lord, and set up a false Christ, an Antichrist in his place. One says, *Lo, here is Christ*, another, *Lo, there*. Here you are bidden to trace his genuine church in the purity of its doctrines, there in the sanctity of its ritual, yet elsewhere in the simple nakedness of its forms and modes. Christ may be present in either, in all, or in none of these churches; for these are not the signs of his coming. But where you see the sick healed and the unhappy soothed, men's wants supplied and their sufferings relieved, the light and truth of God's word dispensed among the poor, and sent forth to the benighted, you need look no farther, — Christ is there, — he, who should come, has come in the midst of that brotherhood, whatever their name, their creed or their forms. We are saved the trouble of catechizing them, — their works testify of them.

This view explains to us the exclusiveness and bigotry, which prevailed in the church for so many ages. Though there has always been silently flowing from Christianity an influence, which has relieved the wants and allayed the troubles of man, the Church very early lost its actively and distinctively philanthropic character. When

"they that believed had all things in common, and parted of their possessions as every man had need," there were no divisions among them. They bore the impress of their Master's love; and by that impress each knew his brother. They were all missionaries of the cross, went on errands of mercy, and bore glad tidings to the poor, and in these things each beheld in every other the seal of discipleship. But soon charity became rather the incidental act, than the habit of the church. While she put on the trappings of pomp and power, the poor were neglected, the benighted were forgotten, the suffering were passed by on the other side. Nowhere, in any considerable portion of the church, could Christ's spirit be traced. And, as love waxed cold, schism and heresy grew. All parts of Christ's professed family having lost the marks of discipleship, by which they had once known each other, sectarian jealousy, partizan warfare raged. And well might Catholics and heretics alike have denied each other the Christian name; for, with here and there a solitary exception, they were all equally unworthy of it. "Is he that should come among you?" might one sect have cried to another. "Whence then in your midst those groans of unpitied suffering, those cries of the desolate and the fatherless unheard but by heaven, those unaided wants and woes, that grinding of the faces of the poor, those Macedonian calls of souls in darkness and error, thrilling in your ears without a response? Surely man's wants are left unsatisfied, his sorrows unrelieved within your pale. Therefore he, who should come, has not come among you,—look ye for another." Thus for ages did the various divisions of Christendom reproach and upbraid each other, yet without taking to heart the good

old proverb, — "Physician, heal thyself." Still God never left himself without a witness. But the true church, which yet bore its Master's lineaments, and whence his spirit might have been rekindled, was often hidden in forests and caverns, sunk in obscurity, branded by anathemas.

The true church, I say; for there has always been one. The apostolic succession has been preserved. And this true church, this apostolic succession we trace not in a straight line through all the vileness and depravity of the Roman hierarchy: for, highly as we revere and cherish that outward organization and those time-hallowed and apostolic forms, which survived in the darkest times, and dimly shadowed forth a purer past and a brighter future, we cannot conceive of any spiritual gift as having resided in the bodies of a corrupt and unchristian prelacy, and having been transmitted at their fingers' ends. The true apostolic succession has followed a devious path. The true church has dwelt now among the cedars of Lebanon, and now in the fastnesses of the Apennines. It has glorified God in the fires of Smithfield, and in the martyred hosts of St. Bartholomew's Eve. It has reared its altars on the hills of Scotland, and among the primeval forests of the New World. It has worshipped in the vast cathedral, and then again in dens and caves of the earth. Its prayers have gone up in the measured cadence and holy beauty of solemn litanies, and then again in the rapt fervor of the man of God, who speaks as the spirit gives him utterance. Its praises have floated to heaven on the organ's strains and in the stately anthem, and then, without voice or sound, from the hearts of the still worshippers, who keep silence in their temple, be-

cause God is there. It has been known, not by its forms and creeds, but by such works as Jesus wrought before the Baptist's disciples. It has numbered among its members those of every form and creed, who have shown their love to God by their love to man. Its only creed and covenant is love, — its only ritual charity, — its only badge of priesthood a double portion of the spirit of Jesus. This church, though on the increase, is still but a little flock. And hence one chief reason, why Christians of different names are yet so slow to own each other. They do not trace in each other that full and fervent charity, which confounds the bigotry of creeds and catechisms. But so soon as the whole church assumes a decidedly philanthropic aspect, so soon as Christians will give themselves no rest, while an ignorant, degraded, suffering fellow-man remains upon earth, then, in these Christ-like works, they will trace in each other their Master's image and superscription.

Thus indeed it is even now, where Christian love has shone forth with peculiar lustre. Who thinks of questioning on sectarian grounds the Christian name and true Christian priesthood of such men as Fenelon and Penn, Oberlin and Neff, Martyn and Heber, Mayhew and Brainerd, Cheverus and Tuckerman? Such men have borne too manifestly the signature of Jesus, even for the narrowest bigot to ask, "Whose image and superscription is this?" They have too manifestly been led by the spirit of God, and commissioned from on high, to be arraigned at the bar of human exclusiveness. They are placed by common consent above the narrow limits of sect or party. They are deemed too much Christians, to have any other name stamped upon them; and good men of every

name feel that they have a property in them. And why has it been thus? Simply because these venerable men reproduced the image of apostolic piety and charity; because they preached the gospel to the poor, and, like their Master, sought out want, and woe, and guilt, and felt the loudest call where there was the deepest need; because they shrank from no form of vice and wretchedness, but had faith in God, and in the name of Jesus of Nazareth could cast out the foulest spirit that ever dwelt in man. And every where, throughout the church, where Christians come together for the relief of the oppressed and the desolate, the poor and benighted, they learn to esteem and love each other, and, however far divided by sectarian landmarks, to trace in each other features of brotherhood. As the church abounds more and more in good works, and all of every name toil to lift the burden of guilt and woe from off our common nature, this mutual tolerance and sympathy will grow, — Christians will see their Master's image reflected from every quarter, — they will see that he, who should come, has come, and is working in the bosom of every separate communion. And, when love becomes the crowning grace of the whole church, then will the walls fall down, — then will the bars between the separate folds be removed, and the disciples will again be one under the blessed name first borne at Antioch.

3. Once more, let us give the question of our text a more immediately personal application. Let us, who profess to believe in Jesus, search ourselves, and see whether our Jesus is indeed the Christ of God. Has he, who should come, come to us, or look we for another? This we may know by "the spirit, which he has given

us." There is no need of examining ourselves about subtleties of doctrine; for, though we have all faith and all knowledge, and yet have not charity, it profiteth us nothing. But have we the spirit of brotherly love shed abroad in our hearts? Is man in all his wanderings and pollutions dear to us as man? Do our pulses throb quick in sympathy with the suffering? Are not our feet slow, our hands idle, when a voice of woe appeals to us? Do we love to do such works as Jesus wrought before the disciples of the Baptist? Is it our delight to carry the bread of life to the hungry soul, and to fill the cup of salvation for the thirsty spirit? And are we conscious of doing these things, not mechanically, but from the heart, from an impulse which will not let us rest, from a love, which cannot bear to be without imparting? My brethren, if these things be found in us, he, who should come, has come, nor need we look for another. Such love to man can flow only from ardent love for the true God. Such fruits can be borne by no sham piety, by no mock religion. Such fruits can never ripen from that hope of the hypocrite, which shall perish. If there be in our souls a fountain of love, which is never dry and never ebbs low, it is a fountain, which only an infinite source can keep thus full. We can thus love only by loving God, and loving all his children in him, and him in all his children. "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death." "He that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?"

Brethren, has he, who should come, come to our respective churches, and to us individually? This is a

question asked concerning us at the present time with a new and peculiar emphasis, by the opponents of those more rational and liberal views of gospel truth and Christian communion, which, though united by no sectarian bond, we hold in common. And it is well that these views should be sustained, and defended by that irresistible weight of argument and scriptural testimony, to which they can make their rightful appeal. But it is one thing to prove our doctrines true, and another to demonstrate that Jesus is with us. We may hold the truth in unrighteousness; and, if we do, our expositions and arguments will fall powerless. Our truest defence is that of a Christ-like spirit manifested in Christ-like works. Christ in our midst can be made manifest only by love unfeigned, by a charity full and free, by our zeal to diffuse the joy of his salvation and the blessedness of his reign among the benighted and the destitute. What then are we doing, individually or collectively, to promote the cause, for which Jesus lived and died? There are several terms of comparison, which we might do well to employ in answering this question.

We might compare our expenditures in religious charity with those, which we make for our own superfluous gratification. Do we spend the most for pleasure, or for Christ, — for the lust of the eye and the pride of life, or for the cause, in which Jesus yielded himself as a sacrifice? It is certain, that, if we came up to the gospel standard of beneficence, our appropriations for sending light to those in darkness would far exceed those, which we make for indulgences, that do not even add to the comfort or happiness of life. We often indeed complain that we cannot afford to give for pious uses; but are

there any of us, who cannot afford such charity better than the widow whom Jesus praised, who cast in her whole living into the treasury of her God? Her two mites were not savings from her luxury; but were wrung by pious zeal from her necessities. It is in charity that we are most prone to commence our retrenchments. As Christians, we ought to end them there, and to yield up any mere superfluity, rather than deny ourselves the luxury of doing good. Do we complain that, in order to do much good, we must deny ourselves? And what is it to be a Christian? "If any man will be my disciple, let him deny himself." To spurn the yoke of self-denial is to strike ourselves from the roll of disciples.

We might again measure our religious charity by its results. How much do we and the churches in communion with us effect annually, or how much have we effected within any given term of years, towards the increase of Christ's kingdom? How much has his reign extended itself through our instrumentality? How many benighted souls have been cheered by light, which we have kindled? Suppose that all Christian churches made efforts and sacrifices in the cause of Christ in just the same proportion, according to their numbers and ability, in which we are making them, how many centuries would it take to evangelize the world? Would the world ever be evangelized? Would our Redeemer's kingdom grow perceptibly? Or would it remain forever stationary? These are solemn questions, — questions, which, I fear, we should find it hard to answer with comfort to our own consciences. It cannot be denied, that, were our zeal and energy in works of Christian charity the rule and standard for the church universal, the wheels of Christ's chariot would drag

slowly and heavily along the path of ages. Yet why should we be exempt from the duty of urging on the conquering car, of preparing for Emmanuel's coronation as King of Kings? Who has given us leave to stand idle, while Christians of so many sects and so many various gifts are rushing into the harvest field? Who has discharged us alike from cost and effort in the warfare against superstition, infidelity and sin? Brethren, on this point it is high time that we should awake out of sleep. It is not enough for us, that we fence our own folds, and feed our own flocks. It behooves us to enlarge our circle of brotherhood, our bounds of neighborhood. All, who can be aided by our charity, have through Christ a claim upon it.

Consider the blessedness of that charity, which aims to convert the sinner from the error of his ways. It were an incalculable good to save a single soul from death. For the sinner thus rescued lives not for himself. He works upon others, upon the community. He leaves an impress of himself, that can never pass away. He leads others into the path of life, and they others still, and so on, in a current of holy influence widening and deepening all down the stream of time. Give in faith, entrust your free-will offering to the God of the harvest; and eternity will reveal fruits, which time can never show. Give; and you shall be recompensed at the resurrection of the just, — you shall rejoice in heaven with those, who, through your charity, shall have been brought into the Savior's fold, and taught the song of the redeemed.

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SHORT PRAYERS

FOR THE

MORNING AND EVENING

OF

EVERY DAY IN THE WEEK.

WITH OCCASIONAL

PRAYERS AND THANKSGIVINGS.

PRINTED FOR THE

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I. R. BUTTS, PRINTER, 2 SCHOOL STREET.

INTRODUCTORY ADDRESS.

To those of my brethren who feel their dependence upon God and their need of salvation through Christ Jesus.

My Dear Friends,

An aged and afflicted man, who has had to pass through many of the sorrows and trials of life, but who "has learned in the station in which God has placed him therewith to be content," affectionately offers the following short and simple prayers to assist you in your communings with your heavenly Father; a duty which he trusts you perform in private and in your families every morning and evening. Prayer is your first obligation and your highest privilege; it is a pouring out of the soul before God, and is attended with great and numerous advantages. In the day of prosperity, when all things go well with you, and your hearts rejoice, how pleasant it is to look up to God, the source of your blessings, and say, "Thou crownest me with loving-kindness and tender mercies!" In the hour of adversity, when your minds are cast down, how comforting it is to go to your heavenly Father with all your griefs and sorrows, encouraged by his own declaration, "Call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me!" In the season of affliction, when you are confined to your dwelling by sickness and pain, how consoling it is to lift up the spirit to that merciful Being "who healeth all our diseases," and in whose hands are "the issues of life and of death!" In the time of poverty, what a relief it is to pray to Him

who knoweth all our wants, and who hath said, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee!" Indeed, whatever be our circumstances, God hears and answers the humble, fervent, persevering prayers of his children; his throne of grace is always accessible, and to that throne we may go, by faith in Jesus Christ, "and find grace and mercy to help in every time of need.

Beloved friends, let an old man therefore beg that you will on no account neglect the duty of prayer. It will be attended with most blessed results both to your families and to yourselves; your children will be excited by your example to love and fear God, and you will enjoy satisfaction and peace in your own souls. Why do so many complain of their inward sorrows and distresses, but because they are such strangers to this devout communion with God? The spirit of devotion is the spirit of happiness, and earnestly do I pray that you may enjoy it; but in order to do so you must use the means, especially by reading the word of God, in which you will find things suited to your spiritual state, and calculated to promote intercourse between God and your souls. Let some portion of scripture be read every day in a devotional manner, and you will find it will lead you into the true spirit of prayer and meditation in the heavenly life, and thus, through the influences of divine grace, you will become more holy, and consequently you will be better prepared to become "partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light."

And now, dear friends, I commend you to God. May this little book, under the divine blessing, be of service to you in your devotions. In the spirit of love it was written, in the same spirit let it be received. The writer of it feels that, from increasing infirmities and the weight of nearly fourscore years, he must soon become a tenant of the grave, and he leaves this little "help to prayer" behind him, in the hope that it will be useful after he is gone. May the Almighty bless this feeble attempt to promote his service and his praise! Believe me, brethren and friends,

Your affectionate well wisher,

ABRAHAM HAWKINS.

PRAYERS.

FOR THE LORD'S DAY MORNING.

O Thou, whose mercies are over all thy works, who art the fountain of all our blessings and the spring of all our joys; whose presence causes even the barren wilderness to rejoice, and whose loving-kindness makes the hearts of thy creatures glad! Thou suppliest all the wants of thy large family, and givest thy bounties with a liberal hand. Thy mercy and goodness have been again extended to us, thine unworthy servants, for thou hast permitted us to behold the return of another holy sabbath morning, and hast granted to us every needful blessing. Most heartily would we thank thee for having brought us to the beginning of this day of sacred rest and sweet communion with thee, our God; and O, that its hallowed hours may be spent in thy service and to thy praise! Bless, we beseech thee, the preaching of thy gospel this day; and grant that it may have free course, and run, and be glorified, until all the ends of the earth shall see thy salvation in Christ Jesus. To this end do thou give to the ministers of thy word thy holy spirit; make them useful in their day and generation, and enable them so

to fulfil the duties of their calling, that multitudes may be brought from sin to holiness, that they may hereafter be raised from earth to heaven. Graciously regard, we beseech thee, O God, the land in which we dwell. As a nation, we are highly favored with religious privileges, but, alas! we have sunk and debased ourselves by our manifold transgressions. O that there may be a true reformation among us, from the highest to the lowest, for thy word declares to us, that "while righteousness exalteth a nation, sin is a reproach to any people." Look in compassion, we pray thee, upon the sick and afflicted, and do thou, in thy mercy, supply their wants out of thine abundant fulness. Comfort them under their sufferings, and lead them to partake of the bread of life and the waters of salvation. Grant thy blessing, heavenly Father, to us, and to our children, and to all who are near and dear to us, and make us all to be of the family of heaven, of the household of faith, and heirs with Christ Jesus in his kingdom of glory. Bless us while in thine house of prayer; direct our thoughts, and words, and actions; watch over us at all times, and keep us from the snares of the world, from the allurements of sin, and the evil propensities of our own hearts, and make us altogether such as thou wouldst have us to be, and such as thou wilt approve in the day of Christ. Forgive our sins, and help our infirmities. Let thine hand conduct us safely through the perplexities of life, that we may never turn from thee, either to the right hand or to the left; and when at last thou shalt call us hence, may we depart in peace to enjoy that eternal sabbath which awaits thy people in heaven above. We ask all in the name of Jesus Christ, thy beloved Son. AMEN.

FOR THE LORD'S DAY EVENING.

O Lord God Almighty! Maker of all things! Judge of all men! whose dwelling is in the highest heavens, who inhabitest the praises of eternity, and who art the Lord and Giver of life! Thou searchest the hearts and triest the reins of the children of men, and nothing can be hid from thine all-penetrating eye. Thou hast seen and known us through the day that is past; thou hast watched over us and preserved us, and before we go to our rest we would render to thee those thanksgivings which are so justly thy due. We bless thee for the holy season we have enjoyed, and the means of spiritual improvement thou hast afforded to us, but lament that we make so little progress in the divine life. O quicken us to greater diligence in seeking after the things that belong to our peace, and help us to enter into a strict examination of our hearts, that we may see how matters stand between thee and our souls. We would bow with reverence and humility at thy heavenly footstool, while with true contrition of heart we confess that we have sinned and come short of thy glory, and that we have merited nothing but thy just displeasure. But do thou, O Lord, have mercy upon us, and forgive us all our transgressions, according to thy mercy in our Saviour, Jesus Christ; and for the time that is to come, may we be led, by divine grace, to walk worthily of our high calling and glorify thy name. We thank thee, O God, for thy tender mercies and loving-kindnesses to us at all times, and especially for having blessed us this day with our food and raiment, and every earthly comfort that we have enjoyed; but above all would we thank thee for the gift

of thy beloved Son, for the means of grace, and for the hope of glory. We would thank thee also for thy holy gospel, which so plainly makes known to us the way to life eternal, and which, by guiding us in the paths of truth and righteousness, is able to make us wise unto salvation, and prepare us for the companionship of the blessed before thy throne. Incline our hearts, we beseech thee, to walk in wisdom's ways, help us to obey thy commands with great delight, enable us to do thy will on earth below as it is done by angels in heaven above, and grant us grace to serve thee in such an acceptable manner, that we may obtain thy favor in this life, and a crown of glory in the life that is to come. And now, Heavenly Father, take us, we pray thee, under thy care and protection through the night that is before us; let us rest beneath the shadow of thy almighty wings; grant to us refreshing sleep, and awake us in the morning to adore thy name. And for all thy care over us, and thy continual mercy to us, we will forever praise thee, through faith in Jesus Christ, who hath taught us, when we pray, to say, "Our Father, who art in heaven; hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come; thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven; give us day by day our daily bread; forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil; for thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. AMEN."

FOR MONDAY MORNING.

O THOU ever blessed God, who art the Giver of every good and perfect gift, the kind Father and Friend of the human

race! Thou art the source of light and the fountain of love, and desirest not the death of sinners, but that they should turn rom their wickedness and live. Look down in pity and compassion upon thy unworthy creatures, now humbly kneeling before thee, penitently imploring thy forgiveness f.r the numerous sins and transgressions which we have committed against thy Divine Majesty, and enable us for the future to live to thy glory, by devoting the remainder of our days to thy service, to the good of our fellow-creatures, and to the salvation of our souls through the Lord Jesus Christ. And do thou, of thy great goodness, keep us this and every day of our lives from the evils that are in the world, and the snares that surround us, for thou knowest our weakness and our liability to fall in the hour of temptation, unless supported by thy powerful hand. Bless us, we beseech thee, in our family and in all our connections, and make us more and more like our beloved Saviour, who was holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners, and who went about doing good. Help us to copy his bright example and to walk in his heavenly footsteps, to take up his cross daily, and to follow him whithersoever he goeth. Give to us, we entreat thee, O God, the spirit of prayer and supplication at all times, and enable us, by the influence of thy spirit, to approach with confidence to a throne of grace, that we may find mercy and grace to help in every time of need. We would come before thee as the disciples of Jesus Christ, beseeching thee to lift up upon us the light of thy countenance, and mercifully to regard the children of thy love. And, O, our Father, may we always act with a single eye to thy glory, remembering that we are ever in thy presence, and beneath thine eye. Take us especially

under thy care through this day, and watch over us for good, and do us good. May we daily see more of the vanity of the world, and the blessedness of trusting alone in thee. May we, by divine strength, be enabled to fight the good fight of faith, and lay hold on eternal life, striving against the sin that doth so easily beset us, and pressing towards the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. And now, O God, we give ourselves, with all that we are and have, to thy service, beseeching thee to make us faithful in our day and generation, and finally to receive us to the joys which are at thy right hand. And to thy name will we ascribe all honor and glory, for ever and ever. AMEN.

FOR MONDAY EVENING.

O THOU Shepherd of Israel, who neither slumberest nor sleepest; by whom we were created, and in whom we live, and move, and have our being! We would draw near to thee in the name of thy dear Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, to thank thee for the mercies of the day that is past, and to ask thy watchful care and keeping through this night. Thou dwellest in that light which no man can approach unto, and yet thou condescendest to regard with compassionate favor the sinful children of men. Thou hast sent thy beloved Son to proclaim the gracious invitation, "Come unto me, all ye who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Lord, we rejoice in the encouraging promise, and come to thee burdened with our sins, and heavily laden with our iniquities, that

we may find rest to our souls by receiving pardon at thine hands. Thou hast said, that "when the wicked man turneth away from the wickedness that he hath committed, and doeth that which is lawful and right, he shall save his soul alive:" oh! that this may be the case with us. To this end do thou mercifully cleanse us from our sins, and wash us from our iniquities; make within us a clean heart, and renew within us a right spirit, that we may be brought to the enjoyment of thy salvation. Help us, O our God, to do thy will, and by repentance, faith, and holiness, to seek after glory, honor, and immortality; let the arms of thy love embrace us; let the aids of thy spirit strengthen us; let the promises of thy word encourage us; and thus may we go on from prospering to prosper, until thou shalt call us to our eternal home. Make us, we pray thee, wholly thine; and cleanse us from all defilement of flesh and spirit, that we may perfect holiness in thy fear. Bless us at all times in our daily employment; let success attend the work of our hands, if it please thee; but while laboring for the bread that perisheth, may we also labor for that bread which endureth to everlasting life. Remember with thy mercies our neighbors and relatives, and make us a blessing to all around us. May thy holy word be the standard of our thoughts, and words, and actions; may it govern our minds, and tempers, and dispositions, and bring every feeling and desire into subjection to thy holy will. May our hearts become thy living temples, and do thou be pleased to take full possession of them and dwell therein. Make us the willing subjects of thy grace, that by our lives and conduct we may manifest to all, that we are the servants of the most high God. And do thou keep us

under thy protection and favor continually, that we may be faithful in thy service, even unto death. Now, Lord, what wait we for? Our hope alone is in thee. O let thy blessing descend, and rest upon us for thy name and mercy's sake. All of which we ask as the followers of thy dear Son, Jesus Christ, for whom we will ever praise thee, and through faith in whom we ascribe to thee the kingdom, the power, and the glory, forever and ever. AMEN.

FOR TUESDAY MORNING.

ALMIGHTY and everlasting God! Thy loving-kindness is new every morning and fresh every evening; great is thy faithfulness. Thou hast mercifully preserved us through the night, and hast brought us to the beginning of another day; thanks be to thy name. O grant that as the sun is risen in the firmament, so the sun of righteousness may arise in our hearts with healing under his wings, to illuminate our dark minds, to cheer our benighted souls, and to inspire us with fresh vigor and holy zeal to run the heavenly race which thou hast set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is now set down at thy right hand in majesty on high. May we always consider him who endured the contradiction of sinners against himself, lest we be faint and weary in our minds, and may we be ever eagerly pressing forward towards our immortal crown. May we go from strength to strength, daily growing in grace, and advancing in the divine life, that our path, like that of the just, may be as the shining

light, which shineth more and more unto the perfect day. And do thou, O Lord, be graciously pleased to keep us at all times beneath the influence of thy holy spirit, that being spiritually minded, we may possess that life and peace which the world can neither give nor take away. We bless thee for the exceedingly great and precious promises thou hast given us; particularly for the assurances of pardon and salvation through Christ Jesus, in the possession of which we rejoice with a joy that is unspeakable and full of glory. May we, the creatures of thy power, become indeed the children of thy grace; and to this end do thou forgive us our transgressions and conform us to the image of thy dear Son, that as he was holy, so we may be holy in all our conduct and conversation. Mercifully save us in every hour of temptation; comfort us in every moment of sorrow; support us in every season of affliction; and whatever be our circumstances, let us abound in the graces of the spirit and in the fruits of righteousness, to thy glory and to thy praise. Help us to live a life of communion with thee; trusting in thee at all times, guided by thy wisdom, and protected by thy power, until at last thou shalt receive us to the joys of the future state. Be with us especially through this day; go forth with us to our labors, and give us strength to perform them, that our hands may minister to our necessities without being burdensome to others. And while we are in the world, may we use it without abusing it, knowing that the fashion thereof passeth away. "Now unto Him that is able to keep us from falling, and to present us faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God, our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and forever." AMEN.

FOR TUESDAY EVENING.

INFINITE and incomprehensible Jehovah! Thou inhabitest eternity, and art clothed with light as with a garment; in wisdom, goodness, and righteousness hast thou created all things, and for thy good pleasure they are and were created. At the close of the toils and the difficulties of another day, we would come into thy presence in the name of Jesus, and with deep humility; earnestly beseeching thee to accept our evening sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving, and to receive us under thy protection during the night that is before us. We know that we are unworthy to appear at thy footstool, for too frequently have we sinned against thee with a high hand and an outstretched arm, and if thou wast strict to mark and severe to require our transgressions at our hands, thou mightest justly cut us off in thy displeasure, and pour out upon us that indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, which thy word has denounced against them that do evil. Our only hope is in thy forgiveness and mercy revealed in the Lord Jesus Christ, who died for our sins, who rose again for our justification, and who ever liveth to make intercession for us. O enter not into judgment with us, nor reward us according to our iniquities, for in thy sight shall no flesh living be justified; but do thou mercifully blot out our sins as a cloud, and our transgressions as a thick cloud, and remember them against us no more. O that for the time to come we may be delivered from all pride, self-righteousness, and hardness of heart; and that, ceasing to do evil, we may learn to do well, and live to the glory of thy holy name. Give us grace, we beseech thee, to serve thee acceptably with reverence and

godly fear all the days of our lives; and whenever we are called out of time into eternity, may we sleep in Jesus, and in the blessed prospect of a joyful resurrection. Of thy abundant mercy do thou be pleased to bless all mankind; let the kingdom of the Redeemer extend itself from sea to sea, and from the rivers to all the ends of the earth, that all may know thee from the least unto the greatest. Regard with thy favor the land in which we dwell, visit us with prosperity and peace, order and overrule our national affairs, and let wisdom and knowledge be the stability of our times. Convince the unconvinced; convert the unconverted; have mercy upon all who have no mercy upon themselves, and let a work of grace be begun and carried on in every penitent soul. Bless all our relations and friends; unite our hearts to fear thy name; guide us by thy unerring wisdom, and finally receive us to thy heavenly glory. And now, Father of mercies! graciously hear and answer these our poor imperfect petitions: forgive if we have asked any thing amiss, and grant to us what through ignorance we have failed to ask, but of which we stand in need. To thy providential care would we commit ourselves for this night, and for the remainder of our lives, beseeching thee to keep us through faith unto salvation, by Jesus Christ; as whose disciples we ask every blessing, and ascribe to thee, the true and living God, unceasing praises. AMEN.

FOR WEDNESDAY MORNING.

MOST blessed and glorious God! the kind Father and Friend of all! who, in thine infinite goodness and compas-

sion didst send thy dear Son into the world to save every perishing sinner from his lost and ruined state. We thank thee that there is a mercy-seat to which we are invited to come, assured that if we ask we shall receive, if we seek we shall find, and if we knock the door of mercy shall be opened before us. May we therefore offer to thee the prayer of faith as disciples of thy Son, and do thou mercifully listen to our supplications, and grant to us our requests, according to the riches of thy glory by Christ Jesus. Deeply impress our minds with a true sense of the value of our souls, and the awfulness of eternity, that we may be led to examine our hearts, and to seek salvation while life and opportunity last. O let us feel the mighty power of divine grace! let it bring us low at the foot of the cross; let it regenerate and sanctify us, both in body and in spirit; let it make us imitators of thee as thy dear children, and thus bring us at length to dwell with thee for ever. With hearts full of gratitude would we thank thee for thy goodness to us through the past night, and in the exercise of faith and hope would we ask thy presence and blessing to be with us through this and every succeeding day. May we go forth to our labors rejoicing in thy mercy, and while engaged in our duties may we abide in thee, that whatever we do may be done to thy glory. Thou alone knowest whatever is before us; in thee alone therefore would we put our trust; and if through any snare we should be led into temptation, do thou deliver us from evil. May we daily become more sensible of our own nothingness, and be led to rely on thee alone for strength and support. Help us to turn away from every sin, and to obey thy holy laws, that, as the willing subjects of thy grace below, we may become

the heirs of thy glory above. Enable us to correct every unholy desire, and to put away every evil thought; to "deny ungodliness and all worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, the glorious appearing of the great God, and of our Saviour Jesus Christ; who gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." Grant to us strength in every time of weakness, fortitude under every trial, support in every affliction, comfort under every sorrow, and faith and hope in the hour of death. And when, at length, thou shalt gather together thy faithful people, — when Christ shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired by all them that believe, — may we be found among the number of those who shall hear from the lips of their Judge that blissful sentence, "Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." Grant these our requests, O merciful God; and to thy name will we ascribe all honor and glory, for ever and ever. AMEN.

FOR WEDNESDAY EVENING.

O GOD, our Heavenly Father! King of kings, and Lord of lords! Thou drawest around us the shades of night, but nothing is concealed from thee. "Thou searchest us and knowest us; thou compassest our path and our lying down, and art acquainted with all our ways; for there is not a word in our tongue, but lo, O

Lord, thou knowest it altogether. If we say, surely the darkness shall cover us, even the night shall be light about us; yea, the darkness hideth not from thee, but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light are both alike to thee." We desire to approach thy footstool this evening with sacred awe, yet with grateful praise, to confess our sins, to acknowledge thy mercies, and to seek thy grace. Too often have we erred and strayed from thy ways, and followed the sinful devices of our own hearts; too seldom have we remembered thee, our Creator, Preserver, Benefactor, and Friend; and if thou, O Lord, shouldst mark our iniquity, who amongst us could stand? But there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared. Thou desirest not a sinner's death. Thou art full of compassion and long-suffering, and art ever waiting to show thyself gracious. We would therefore cast ourselves into the arms of thy mercy, beseeching thee to extend to us thy forgiving love. O that thou wouldst create within us clean and contrite hearts, and make us partakers of thy heavenly nature by Christ Jesus. Let thy blessed spirit assist us, that we may overcome every sin, and love thee with all our hearts and souls and strength. Give us to see the nothingness and vanity of the world, and the importance of preparing ourselves for thy heavenly kingdom; instruct us in the right performance of our various duties, prosper us in all our righteous undertakings, sanctify us as vessels of honor to thy use and service, and let us finally, by thy mercy, be received to dwell with thee forever. Look down, O God, upon the sons and daughters of affliction; may their beds be made in their sicknesses, and the sufferings of their bodies be overruled for the good of their souls. Regard

also in thy mercy the poor and the needy; provide for their necessities, supply their wants, and enrich them with the treasures of Jesus Christ. Raise up those who are cast down; plead the cause of the oppressed; comfort the comfortless; relieve the fatherless and the widow; and be a friend to those who have none to help them. May all who know thee not, be brought to know thee; may the gospel win its way, and stop not until truth and righteousness fill the earth. Let the land of our nativity be the land of peace, and let all who are in authority remember their responsibility, and act as in thy sight. Let our families be united to the family in heaven; and let our houses be houses of prayer, that the rising generation may be a seed to serve thee, and that we all, by being made holy, may be made happy. And now, O Lord, do thou be with us through the silent watches of the night, and cause us to enjoy sweet repose, that we may awake in the morning with powers refreshed to perform the duties of the day. Hear us in these our prayers, O God most holy, for thy mercy's sake in Jesus Christ; while to thee we ascribe all praise and majesty and dominion, both now and for ever. AMEN.

FOR THURSDAY MORNING.

ALMIGHTY and everlasting God! Maker of heaven and earth, and Preserver of all things! Thou art the Author and Giver of life; and to thee alone is all our worship and homage due. With the return of the morning we would come into thy presence to acknowledge our

continual dependence upon thee for every spiritual and temporal good, and to ask thy favor and blessing through this day. We rejoice that like as a father pitieth his children, so thou, O Lord, dost pity them who have a desire to fear thee: for thou knowest our frame, thou rememberest we are dust. Satisfy us, we entreat thee, with thy mercy, that we may rejoice and be glad in this and every other day of our lives; lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us, for thy loving-kindness is better than life, and therefore our lips shall praise thee. We thank thee for the blessed hope of salvation which thou hast given us by the Lord Jesus Christ, who died the just for the unjust, to bring us to thee our God. Too long have we been tied and bound by the chains and fetters of sin, and too often have we become the willing captives of the adversary by following the evil inclinations and desires of our minds. But as prisoners of hope we would turn to the stronghold to which thou hast directed us by faith in Christ Jesus. Enable us to do this with full purpose of heart, and with a lively dependence upon the aid of thy spirit, that our souls may find favor with thee and live; and that for the future we may walk before thee in holiness and righteousness all our days. Prepare us, we pray thee, for every thing that is before us; sanctify every feeling; give us grace to resist every unholy desire, and keep our hearts in perfect peace. Enlighten our understandings, that we may behold wondrous things out of thy holy law; bless thy word to us at all times; let it make us wise unto salvation, and thus bring happiness to our souls. Thou knowest the temptations to which we are exposed, and our liability to go astray; help us, we beseech thee, to watch unto

prayer, to remember that we are beneath thine all-seeing eye, and to act as in thy sight. May we ever place the example of our Saviour before us, and where we perceive the print of his foot-steps may we endeavour to set our feet too. Guide us, O God, in every perplexity, support us under every trial, preserve us in every temptation, comfort us under every adverse circumstance, make us useful in our generation, and in doing good crown our efforts with great success. Instruct us in the way of truth more perfectly; transform us into thy heavenly likeness; increase us in every Christian grace, and make us all that thou wouldst have us to be. Be with us in all our duties and labors this day; go with us where we go, dwell with us where we dwell, and never leave us nor forsake us. Keep us in the hollow of thine hand, watch over us for good, and do more and better for us than we can either ask or think, or by any means conceive. And commending ourselves, both in body and soul to thy fatherly protection, we will ascribe to thee, our Heavenly Father, everlasting praises. AMEN.

FOR THURSDAY EVENING.

ETERNAL and unchangeable Jehovah! Thou art infinite in thy goodness, fearful in thy attributes, and glorious in all thy perfections. Thy tender mercies are over all thy works, and thy bounties extend to every living thing. Encouraged by thy declarations, as the followers of thy dear Son, we would approach thy footstool, beseeching thee to teach us to pray, and to pour out upon

us the spirit of grace and supplication. May the words of our lips and the desires of our hearts be acceptable in thy sight, and may the answer of peace be returned to our souls. We are utterly unworthy to appear in thy presence, but we trust in thy mercy, and hope for thy salvation. We thank thee, O Lord, for the many blessings with which thou hast crowned our days: thou hast not only created, but hast mercifully preserved and provided for us, from the moment of our birth until the present hour. Thou hast also bestowed upon us every spiritual blessing through Christ Jesus. O that thy goodness may have such power and influence over us, that we may be constrained henceforth to live to the glory of thy name. May we be as trees planted by rivers of water, bringing forth their fruit in due season; and may others, from our example, be led to serve thee in the beauty of holiness. Sanctify us, O Lord, continually; increase our faith, and hope, and love; illuminate our understandings; heal our infirmities, write thy law in our hearts, deliver us from evil, and bring us safe to thy heavenly kingdom. As those who profess to be risen with Christ, may our affections never be set on the things of earth, but on things above; looking for that city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God. Wean our thoughts from the world, we beseech thee; purify our hearts from the dross of sin; lead us on from strength to strength in the heavenly way; establish us in a firm and lively faith, and bring us off more than conquerors, through thy dear Son. Grant, O thou most merciful Father, that we may ever adorn our Christian profession, in all things setting thee before us, and living to thy praise; and when our earthly race is run, and our mortal course is finished, and

thy faithful ones shall be gathered together at the resurrection of the just, may we be found among them, and share their bright reward in the realms of eternal glory. These mercies, with all others needful for us, we humbly beg through faith in Jesus Christ, thy Son, our Saviour. For him we will continually praise thee, and through him we will truly ascribe to thee the kingdom, the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. AMEN.

FOR FRIDAY MORNING.

O THOU glorious Lord God! the merciful Father of the human race, who desirest not the death of sinners, but rather that they should turn from their evil ways and live. Encouraged by thy merciful declarations, we would kneel before thee in the name of Jesus Christ, thy dear Son, our Saviour, beseeching thee to regard us with an eye of favor and compassion, to blot out our manifold and aggravated transgressions, and to give us grace that henceforth we may avoid that which is evil, and cleave to that which is good. Thou art of purer eyes than to behold iniquity but with abhorrence, and thou requirest purity of heart in all those who would acceptably approach thy throne. We pray thee therefore to make us holy in all our thoughts, our words, and actions, that the words of our mouth and the meditations of our heart may ever be well-pleasing in thy sight, and that we may adorn our Christian profession by entire devotedness to thy service. Deeply impress upon our hearts, we entreat thee, a proper sense of the shortness of time, and the great importance of preparation for eternity; and so teach us to

number our days, that we may apply our hearts to divine wisdom. Enable us to work out with fear and trembling our soul's salvation, and do thou be pleased to work in us both to will and to do thy good pleasure. Help us steadfastly to confide in thy redeeming mercy through Jesus Christ, and to forsake every evil way, that instead of remaining the servants of sin, we may become the subjects of Divine grace. Grant to us, we beseech thee, thine aid under every trial, and strength in every hour of temptation, and bring us off victorious over every spiritual adversary, through Him who hath loved us. May the word of Christ richly dwell in us in all wisdom; may the spirit of Christ influence our feelings and dispositions, and may the consolations of Christ abound in us more and more. And thus may we be prepared for a sick bed and a dying hour; that when the trumpet shall sound and the dead shall be raised, an entrance may be ministered to us abundantly into thy glorious kingdom. And while we thus pray for ourselves, we would implore thee graciously to look down upon all our brethren of mankind. Let the sick and the afflicted be divinely supported under their various sufferings; let the tempted and the tried be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might; let the troubled and the distressed receive consolation from above; let the poor and the needy have their wants supplied; let all, from the highest to the lowest, give themselves to thee, and thus let the earth be filled with thy praise. Mercifully hear us, O God, in these our imperfect supplications, and answer them for thy name's sake, according to thy revelation through our Lord Jesus Christ. It is as his disciples that we ask every blessing, ascribing to thee, the true and living God, the kingdom, the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. AMEN.

FOR FRIDAY EVENING.

O Thou infinitely great and glorious Being, who makest the outgoings of the morning and the evening to rejoice! We would kneel in thy presence with adoring gratitude and sacred awe, humbly imploring thee to look with mercy upon thy unworthy creatures, and to accept our evening offering of thanksgiving and praise. It is in thee that we live and move and have our being; thy goodness created us, thy power preserves us, thy bounty supplies our wants, and thy glory ought therefore to be our constant aim and end. But, alas! with shame and confusion of face we have to confess that hitherto we have lived too much to ourselves, and too little to thee, that we have followed the devices and desires of our own hearts, and have strayed into the paths of sin. Pardon, we beseech thee, O God, the ungrateful returns we have hitherto made for all thy goodness, and incline our hearts henceforth to serve thee in holiness and righteousness all our days. Enable us, we pray thee, to avoid all pride and self-will, to seek after wisdom, meekness, and humility, and to watch unto prayer. May thy word be a light to our feet and a lamp to our paths; may thy holy spirit be our comfort and our guide, and be thou thyself our all in all. Grant that we may ever show by our godly walk and conversation that we have imbibed the temper and disposition that were in Jesus Christ, and may others be led by our example to glorify thee, our Father in heaven. Impress upon our minds, we entreat thee, a proper consideration of the shortness and uncertainty of this life, and the importance of being prepared for the life that is to come, and may these considerations

lead us earnestly to labor, so that we may hereafter enter into the rest that remaineth for thy people. Never suffer us, O God, to fall from thee; uphold our fainting steps in virtue's ways; make us to be thine in life, in death, and forever; and finally bring us, through Jesus Christ, to join the company of the blessed before thy throne. And now, merciful Father, be pleased to take charge of us this night; keep us safe beneath the shadow of thy wings; and whether we sleep or wake, may we be still with thee. We rejoice that there is a world before us in which there shall be no night nor darkness, but perfect, everlasting day; and our desire is that we may be brought, through our Lord Jesus Christ, to dwell for ever in that happy state. May we by a life of holiness be fitted for it, and by divine grace be brought to it: in the hope of this may we live, and in the prospect of it may we die. And now, Lord, what wait we for? our trust is in thee. O take possession of our hearts, and by thy spirit's influence make us more and more like thy blessed self. These mercies, with all others needful for us, we humbly and earnestly implore through faith in the gospel of thy Son Jesus Christ, our Redeemer and Saviour. AMEN.

FOR SATURDAY MORNING.

ETERNAL and ever blessed God! In the name of Jesus Christ we come before thee, to return our heartfelt thanks for the mercies of the past night, to acknowledge our dependence, to renew our vows and purposes of obedience, and to seek thy protection and guidance through the day

that is before us. Blessed, for ever blessed be thy glorious name, for the revelation which thou hast been pleased to make of thyself in the world of nature, in the dispensations of thy providence, and in the words of thy grace; so that we can rejoice in thee as our Creator, our Preserver, our Father, and our never-failing Friend. Incline our hearts, we beseech thee, to trust in thee at all times, and in all our actions to keep thy glory in view, knowing that we must one day stand at thy judgment-bar, and that those alone who have been faithful unto death shall then receive the crown of life which thou hast promised. May we ever have grace to avoid the broad way which leadeth to destruction, and to walk in that strait and narrow path which leadeth unto life eternal; and do thou mercifully keep our feet from falling, and our eyes from tears, that we may dwell with thee in the land of the living. Pardon, O God, our many transgressions; make us holy, that we may be happy; and at length receive us to thyself in heaven, according to thy mercy in Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour. We desire to praise thee, O Lord, for the many mercies and privileges we enjoy; for the powers of our bodies and the faculties of our souls; for the means of divine grace which we so abundantly possess, and, above all, for that holy gospel which is able to make us wise unto salvation. Graciously be pleased to continue these mercies to us, O Heavenly Father, and help us diligently to improve them, so that our souls may advance in the divine life, and we may be enabled to go on from strength to strength, until we appear in Zion before thee our God. Let this and every succeeding day be devoted to thy fear, remembering that thy watchful eyes are upon us in every place, and thou art acquainted with every secret feeling of the heart. O,

let us keep a guard upon ourselves in our thoughts, and words, and actions: purify us, we beseech thee, from the dross of earth and sin; wean our affections from worldly things, and conform us to the image of thy beloved Son, Jesus Christ. Exposed as we are to the trials and afflictions of this mortal state, may we consider that thou art the Sovereign of the universe, directing all affairs, and making every thing to work together for thy people's good; and when we are tried, may patience have its perfect work in our hearts; and by trust and submission, may we glorify thy name. Hear us, Father of mercies, in these the desires of our souls, and answer our petitions for thy loving-kindness' sake, revealed and sealed to us by Jesus Christ, in whose name we ask every blessing. AMEN.

FOR SATURDAY EVENING.

MOST merciful and gracious Lord God! How great is thy goodness! how vast is thy love! Another day, yea, another week, has been brought to its close, and we are so much nearer the eternal world. We would hasten to thy footstool with our evening sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving for thy many mercies, beseeching thee to teach us how to pray, and what to pray for, that we may approach thee with the spirit and with the understanding, and worship thee in sincerity and in truth. Help us, O Lord, by thy quickening power to approach thy throne aright, and mercifully grant to us a sense of thy forgiving love, that we may find thee to be the rock of our salvation, and the foundation of our hopes in time and eter-

nity. We desire to bless thee, O God, that unworthy as we are of thy regard, thou still hast not cast us off, but hast watched over and preserved us until this hour. In looking back on the week that is now brought to its close, we are humbled by the remembrance that so much of it has been dishonored by sin, and so little of it been given to thee. Too frequently have we forgotten the Friend who has loaded us with benefits, the Source whence all our wants have been supplied. Ungrateful has been our conduct, and thou mightest in just judgment forsake us, and cast us away from thy presence. But thou desirest not that we should perish, and takest no pleasure in our death, for unto thee, the Lord God, belong mercies and forgivenesses, though we have rebelled against thee, and have not obeyed thy voice to walk in the laws which thou hast set before us. It is to thee, O thou most merciful and gracious Being, that we desire now to dedicate ourselves with all that we are and have. O let us live a life of fellowship and communion with thee, and thy beloved Son Jesus Christ, increasing in every thing that is excellent, and advancing daily in meetness for the inheritance of the saints in light. As days and weeks pass away, may we be found growing in grace, and becoming stronger and stronger in the good ways of the Lord. To this end, may we diligently use the means thou hast appointed in thy rich grace, and be led to seek after holiness, meekness, patience, temperance, humility, and charity; and may these and all other Christian excellencies and virtues abound in us more and more, until an entrance is given to us into thy glorious kingdom. Save us, O God, from all self-dependence and self-delusion, and enable us to set thee always before us, that the

fear of thee may direct and sanctify all our actions, to thy glory and our souls' good. Bless, we entreat thee, all thy creatures; let thy kingdom come, and let the spirit of piety fill every heart. O, send out thy light and thy truth; comfort the afflicted, restore the wandering, forgive the penitent, and let the knowledge of thee and thy Son fill the earth. Mercifully regard our relatives and friends; be thou the guide of all our lives; make us fruitful in every good work to thy glory, and evermore bless and keep us through Jesus Christ. AMEN.

OCCASIONAL PRAYERS.

I.—FOR SUPPORT UNDER AFFLICTION.

UNCHANGEABLE and eternal God! Amidst the changes of this earthly state we would look to thee as the Ruler of all things, and the refuge of thy people. Thou doest according to thy will in the heavens above and in the earth beneath, and none can stay thine hand, or ask thee, What doest thou? Thou hast seen fit in thy wisdom to visit us with the afflictive dispensations of thy providence, and thus to make trial of our faith and hope. O that we may find that it is good for us to be afflicted, and bow with submission to thy holy will. May patience have its perfect work in our hearts, and lead us to wait with trust

and confidence until thou shalt compass us about with songs of deliverance. Grant that as our day is, so our strength may also be, that the affliction with which we are visited may be sanctified to our souls, and work out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. May we learn righteousness from thy judgments, and receive profit from thy corrections, and come forth from the furnace of trial as the purified gold. And do thou graciously receive us at the last to that blessed state where sin and suffering never enter, where all tears shall be wiped away, and sighing and crying shall be for ever unknown. To thee, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort, the hope and consolation of thy people, the God and Father of Jesus Christ our Lord, be everlasting praises. AMEN.

II. — FOR A SICK PERSON.

O THOU, who knowest my frame and rememberest that I am but dust, who dost not willingly afflict nor grieve the children of men, who chastenest, not for thy pleasure, but for my profit! Give me grace, I beseech thee, to bear with patience and submission the sickness with which I am visited, and let it be overruled for my present and my future good. May it be the means of weaning my thoughts from the world, and of leading me to thee, the Physician of souls. Mercifully look down upon me, O God, in my low estate; and if it please thee, in thine own good time, restore me again to health and strength, that I may praise thy name. Under my bodily

sufferings do thou graciously support and comfort my fainting spirit, and prepare me for either longer life or early death. Remove, I pray thee, all distressing doubts and fears; endue me with holy resignation to thy will; forgive my many transgressions, increase my hope in my blessed Saviour; fill my heart with joy and peace in believing; and at length receive me to thyself in glory, through thy mercy in Jesus Christ. AMEN.

III. — FOR A YOUNG PERSON.

O HOLY and blessed God! I desire to approach thee with penitence and humility, to acknowledge my offences and to ask thy forgiveness. Regard in thy compassion one who has a desire to flee from sin, and to remember thee his Creator in the days of his youth. I come to thee, my Heavenly Father, in the name of Jesus Christ, for pardon and peace, beseeching thee that it may please thee of thy infinite goodness to guide me safely through the perplexities of life to which I am exposed, to deliver me in every hour of temptation, and to make me a monument of thy saving grace. O let me, as thy child, ever be the object of thy kind regard; let thy love fill my soul; and whatever may be my earthly lot, may I in all my ways acknowledge thee, that thou mayest direct my paths. May the whole of my days be devoted to thy service; and after a life of holiness and usefulness here, may I be received to dwell with thee in joy and felicity hereafter, through thy grace in Jesus Christ thy dear Son, my Redeemer. AMEN.

IV.—FOR AN AGED PERSON.

O Most merciful and glorious God! Thou hast by thy continued providence brought me thy unworthy servant to hoary hairs and tottering limbs, and in looking back upon the years of my pilgrimage that are gone, I have thankfully to acknowledge thy goodness to me from the moment of my birth until the present hour. Abundantly have I experienced thy mercy and thy truth, thy faithfulness and thy love, and now that I am old and grey-headed thou wilt not forsake me. To thee, O Lord, therefore, as to a faithful Creator, do I commit my soul. Thou art a God of mercy and compassion, and in thee do I put my trust; thou hast been my protector, preserver, benefactor, and guide, and my praise shall be continually of thee. O let my last days be my best days, and when thou shalt see fit to call me hence, may my faith and my hope be found resting on thy mercy in Jesus Christ. Lord, be thou with me in these my days of weakness and infirmity, give me grace to lean by faith on thy promises for strength, and finally bring me to the rest which remaineth for thy people, through my blessed Saviour and Redeemer. Amen.

V.—FOR A DYING PERSON.

O Thou, to whom belong the issues of life and of death, who at first didst give existence, and hast a right, whenever thou pleasest, to take it away! Hear us, we humbly

pray thee, on behalf of our dying brother, and fit him for this his last great change. Let thy blessed presence be with him in his departing moments, let faith and hope sustain his sinking spirit, and though his heart and his flesh fail, be thou the strength of his heart, and his portion for ever. To thy all-merciful hand do we commend him, beseeching thee to keep him in his last moments, to take away from him the bitterness of death, to cheer him as he passes through the dark valley, to give him the victory over the last enemy, and to receive him hereafter to thine eternal kingdom. O let the Saviour now be precious to his heart, and let a foretaste of heavenly glory fill his soul. Grant to him, we beseech thee, an easy dismissal from the poor perishing body, and let him gently fall asleep in Jesus, in the blissful assurance of a joyful immortality. Graciously be pleased to regard the living as well as the dying, teach us to prepare ourselves for our final change, and grant that we may all meet together before thy throne at the resurrection of the just, of which thou hast given us assurance through our Mediator and Saviour Jesus Christ. AMEN.

VI.—A PARENT'S PRAYER.

ALL glorious and eternal God! Thou art the Father of all the families of the earth, the common Parent of all mankind. Be thou a God and Father to us and to our children, and enable us to bring them up in thy fear and to thy praise. May it ever be our object and desire, both by our instructions and our example, to lead them in the

paths of righteousness, and do thou be pleased mercifully to smile upon our endeavors and to crown them with thy blessing. Grant that our children may be obedient and teachable, and grow up to be useful in society and members of the household of faith. Preserve them, O God, from youthful sins, and sanctify them to thy service; let thy spirit be their guide, and thy word be their delight. If prosperity should be their lot, may they be thankful; if adversity, may they be resigned: and whatever be their condition, may they live to thy glory, and their own and their fellow-creatures' good. And at the judgment day, being able to say, "Lord, here are we and the children thou hast given us," may we enter together into the joy of our Lord, and join the glorious company of the just before thy throne. Grant these the desires of our hearts, we beseech thee, O God, which we have confidence to utter through faith in Jesus Christ thy beloved Son, our Master and Redeemer. AMEN.

THANKSGIVINGS.

I.—FOR RECOVERY FROM SICKNESS.

THANKS, everlasting thanks be to thy name, O Lord, for the goodness which thou hast shown to thine unworthy servant in raising me up from a bed of sickness, and restoring me again to health and vigor. Thou forgivest

mine iniquities, thou healest my diseases, thou crownest my life with loving-kindness and tender mercies, and therefore it becomes me gratefully to say, "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name!" Accept my thanksgivings, Almighty Father, for having delivered my soul from death, and mine eyes from tears. O that with full purpose of heart I may ever walk before thee in the land of the living, and never forget the instructions I received, and the resolutions I made in the time of my affliction. May this fresh instance of mercy which I have received at thine hands constrain me always to live to thy glory; and finally do thou be pleased to receive me to thyself, through thy compassion and grace in Jesus Christ. AMEN.

II. — A GENERAL THANKSGIVING.

O GOD! We cannot add to thy glory, but we entreat thee graciously to receive our thanksgivings for the many mercies both temporal and spiritual we have received from thy bounty. Thou loadest us daily with thy benefits; thou watchest over us continually, and rejoicest to do us good, and we desire to bless thee with our whole heart for all thy care and kindness. May we show our gratitude not merely by our lips but also by our lives, ever aiming to walk before thee in holiness, and to extend thy praise. And do thou be pleased mercifully to keep us from all evil, and to incline our hearts to obey thy commands. Bless and prosper us all our days; and when we die, receive us to thyself in eternal glory, according to our hope through Jesus Christ, our Lord. AMEN.

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ON THE

USES OF THE COMMUNION,

AND THE

PROPRIETY OF A GENERAL ATTENDANCE UPON IT.

BY ORVILLE DEWEY, D. D.

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USES OF THE COMMUNION.

I WISH to offer some thoughts in this Essay, upon the uses of the Communion, and the propriety of a general attendance upon it. From various causes, some of which are to be traced to historical events, others to doctrinal errors, and others still to a superstition ever lurking in men's minds, — from various causes, I say, it has come to pass that a ritual service, intended for the edification of the whole body of believers and worshippers, has been consigned over to the charge of a few. That which was meant to be a bond of union has become a badge, not of sectarian, but — what is worse — of personal distinction. A symbolic observance, of easy interpretation and of wide comprehensiveness, designed to be a common ground among different nations, and a common expositor of the faith among differing languages, has been made a peculiar and a profound mystery. A broad and generous institution is turned into a mystic singularity. And that, which by the tenderest pleadings was set forth to draw all men to Christ, — to be a rite of Christ's love and compassion and fellowship, is made to multitudes to be a rite of repulsion and estrangement. I verily believe, that if there were no such rite as the Lord's Supper, in our

churches, many would feel that they have a part and an interest in religion, which they now consider as denied to them. I do not say that this is a good reason for abandoning the ordinance; but I say that it is a good reason for considering most seriously the views that are entertained of it. And I do say also, that so it was not in the beginning. It is observable, indeed, that in the founder of this institution there was none of that extreme sensitiveness about its profanation, that has prevailed in later days; for he did not forbid Judas from partaking in it, though he knew that murder and betrayal were in his heart. And when it fell into the hands of the Apostles, when the early Christian congregations were gathered, we know that all who believed in Christ, and desired to place themselves under his discipline, — that is to say, that the entire company of Christian worshippers, — were communicants; that they as much and as freely participated in the act of communion, as in the act of prayer. The table of the Lord's Supper was spread; and the only condition of approach to it was faith in Christ, — a hearty reception of him as a heaven-commissioned Master and Saviour. There is no evidence that there was any church vote, or any exertion of the Apostolic will, in the matter. A credible expression of faith was the unquestioned passport. And when the children of these primitive confessors grew up, and took the places of their fathers, they all succeeded to the inheritance of their privileges. So it continued to be, till the time of the Reformation; so it is in the Catholic church to this day.

It is upon this primitive ground of general participation, that I would wish to see the Communion placed in

our congregations. I could wish that every person, who believes in Christianity, and seriously purposes to lead a life in accordance with it, would come and engage in the acts and offices and meditations of this holy season. If there be any person among us of infidel principles, or vicious life, it is true that I could not advise his coming to the table of the Lord; there would be an utter impropriety in his coming. So far, doubtless, the act of communion is a profession of religion. It is a profession of Christianity, and of Christianity as the law and guide of life. But it is not the profession of any peculiar sanctity, of any superiority to others; it is only the avowal of a sincere desire to attain to the elevated virtues of Christianity; to follow Christ as the heaven-ordained Master. Every person, faithfully entertaining such a desire is fully entitled thus to come and express it; and to seek to seal and confirm it. It is to such emphatically that the Communion offers its aid.

Were the ordinance arranged as I would wish, the whole time of the Morning Service should be given to it. It should not be set aside in a corner, nor brought in at the close of another service, by which our minds had been already exhausted. The whole congregation, — that is, of the serious, thoughtful, and religiously disposed, who believe in Christ, — should gather around the table, and the pastor should from time to time, during the service, utter such thoughts as the occasion would suggest to him; thoughts which would occupy as much space in the delivery as a sermon, and would be, I believe, not less useful, but more so.

But what, it may be asked, is the advantage of having any such particular occasion, any such special meditation

at all? Why should Christ, and the death of Christ, be made the subject of this peculiar consideration? What propriety has it, and what advantage would it offer to us, over and above what belong to the ordinary devotions and meditations of the sanctuary?

This question I shall attempt now to answer; and the rather, because I fear, that only a kind of demure and unbelieving assent is frequently yielded to the expediency and importance of that commemoration of Christ, which obtains in the Christian church. That the name of Christ should be frequently named in the churches; that constant references to the Saviour should mingle with our prayers and our meditations; that times and seasons should be set apart for the special remembrance of his sacrifice; all this is admitted to be proper, and has been so long admitted to be proper, that assent has lost much of the character of an original conviction. Faith, when it loses sight of its original grounds, is apt to die out; and hence it is, that not only this or that particular ordinance, but even all general worship is sometimes brought into question. The old faith is dead, and there is no new one to replace it. It is therefore important to go back, from time to time, to the primary reasons for certain institutions; and this is what I now propose to do in reference to the observance of the Lord's Supper.

In regard to this rite in particular, there is an idea prevailing that it is celebrated, because it is something that Christians *must do;* — because that without it, they could not be Christians. The observance is looked upon, not so much as a rational, as a ritual act or usage; something merely commanded, or long used, which it is not proper to neglect; or something that is, by appoint-

ment, to procure the Divine favor, or some spiritual good, and which therefore it is not safe to neglect. The feeling of some is, that it came into the church under peculiar circumstances, and that, if the question were about its establishment *now*, there would be no sufficient reason for it. Let this then be the question. Surely every rite is originally established for some reasons, — for reasons, too, founded in intrinsic propriety, and having relation to our instruction, impression, improvement. Every rite is designed to teach something that is worth knowing or remembering; and to impress what it teaches by fixing attention. This is the whole theory of ritual usages. Most ritual observances are but forms of meditation. The uplifted eyes and bended knees, or the head reverently bowed and the eyes closed in prayer, are thus far ritual; they help the mind by fixing attention. Grant, indeed, the original propriety of the act; but its *use* is to fix attention.

With these preliminary remarks, I proceed to consider the original and the still existing grounds and reasons for the commemoration of Christ, in the rite, which for that express purpose he instituted.

1. Let it then be observed, in the first place, that the chief means of religious progress is to be found in this one thing, — that is to say, a just, clear, and impressive idea of what religion is. The grand instrument of improvement is admitted to be *truth*. "Sanctify them," said our Saviour, "through thy truth." But what especially is this truth? I say, it is truth with regard to what a pure and religious life is. It is the lofty ideal of virtue that carries us to the lofty practice of virtue. Of course we cannot be good at all, unless we know what goodness

is. And in proportion as our idea of goodness is elevated, are we provided with the efficient means that most powerfully teach and impel us to advance in goodness. Put into any mind that lofty ideal, and it cannot rest easy with low attainments; it is stung with shame at its defects; it is urged forward by a law of its very nature. So long as it counts not itself to have apprehended, it must press forward.

Indeed to see the wisdom and blessedness of a right life, — to apprehend it clearly and deeply, — to have the truth of this wrought out in the soul, — beyond all question and doubt, — this is one of the most momentous of all convictions. The learning of a hundred sciences were nothing to a man's happiness and dignity, compared with this. It is the very business and consummation of a wise man's enquiries to know this. Let this be once fixed in his mind, and with what disdain can he tread upon all the baits and allurements of passion and the world; how calmly can he meet all the calamities of life, — feeling that he has an aim and a treasure superior to them all. All earthly interests, objects, and circumstances, then revolve around him as things merely phenomenal and vanishing; means and ministers are they all to the loftier being of his mind; ends are they not — none of them; "none of these things move me," can he say with an Apostle, "neither count I my life dear unto me, that I may be found in Christ." What indeed is the struggle of virtue but this, — a struggle between the idea and the feeling of an inward, pure, and blessed life, and the thousand seductions of appetite, ambition, and interest! Which will make me happy? — is the question forever agitated in the secret bosom. In which lies the

chief good, the nobleness, and blessedness, and true interest of man? And, suppose a man not merely to yield a demure and ineffectual assent to the superiority of a good and righteous life, but to have a living persuasion that in this lies all his essential welfare; that a hundred crowns of honor, a thousand fortunes, or pleasures, flowing in upon him in a thousand streams, are nothing compared with the preciousness of an inward, devout, and divine life — and what a hold then has that life upon him! What can help him in wise and holy living like that conviction!

But what now is to help him to that conviction? I answer, nothing, instrumentally, but meditation. God will aid his true endeavor; but there is nothing within his own reach to do, but to meditate. He must fix his mind upon the divine ideal of a holy life, in order to realize it. He must go down into the depths of his soul; he must study its nature, its capacities, its wants; he must find out what it was made for. He must become familiar, by contemplation, with the beauty of rectitude, with the divinity of goodness, with the venerableness of sanctity, with the majesty and humbleness of prayer, with the heroism of virtue, with the sublimity of devotion. Thoughts, glowing thoughts of purity, and gentleness, and candor, and forbearance, and disinterestedness, and love divine, must become his bosom companions. Where these thoughts dwell not, there will be no improvement,— there can be none; where they abide and live, — where they live in self-reproach, and struggle in prayer, there is garnered up the whole magazine of means, — the very means of salvation.

2. All this being admitted, and being indeed most

evident, the next observation I have to offer is, that all this ideal of excellence is perfectly realized in Christ.

It is a wonderful thing to contemplate, — upon the high table-land of human history, — this image of perfect spiritual beauty. There it stands, in the sight of all men; and from whatsoever age or country the eye hath been directed, it hath never discovered in that living excellence one single fault. No picture of such a life, of such immaculate excellence, was ever imagined, till the living original appeared, and drew from the pens of simple fishermen, such a story of wisdom, and goodness, and grandeur, as human genius and inspiration had never before reached, — have never since equalled. It is indeed a wonderful thing to contemplate, — the single embodiment, the solitary realization of all and more than all the visions of moral beauty that had ever passed, in brightest splendors of faintest shadowings, before the human imagination! — and that faultless model found in Judea! — as strange, as wonderful a thing, as if the most perfect Phidian statue had risen, chiselled into more than mortal beauty, upon the crags of the wildest and most savage country!

Now the great difficulty about this excellence is its inaccessibleness. Its own elevation might have presented a sufficient obstacle to weak and erring creatures; but this obstacle has been incalculably increased by causes, lying, not in the object contemplated, but in our manner of viewing it. If we clothe Christ with the attributes of Divinity, it is difficult to see how he can be an example to humanity. For, although his manhood be held as well as his godhead, yet the supposed intimate union of both, so as to make one, only one self-conscious being, must

impart such a peculiarity to his human virtue as almost entirely to remove it from all approach and imitation. This, it may be thought, with our creed, does not concern us. But believe me, the remnants or relics of all the prevalent creeds, that ever were in the church, are still lingering in our minds; the influence of a creed is not dismissed with an act of disbelief, nor is it worn out in one generation. Still the force of Christ's example is immensely weakened, — is, in many minds, reduced almost to nothing, by the mystery that has surrounded his person. I say of his example. His precepts, his religion and religious system are undoubtedly exerting a powerful influence. But how few feel his example, as they feel the last biography of a good man that they have read! How few say in regard to the questions of conduct and feeling that are daily arising, — "Would Jesus have done this? — would he have felt thus?" His immaculate purity, I suspect, is commonly regarded as a kind of negative, undisturbed innocence, rather than as that result of a constant struggle, amidst temptation and difficulty, which doubtless it was. For he was tempted in all points as we are, though without sin. But how few realize this, — realize, that here was a being who grappled, not indeed with the power of *vitiated* appetite and desire, but who grappled with the natural energy and might of every human passion, subdued it with calm and resolute will, and held with unrelaxing grasp the prize of his moral greatness, — realize, that he was good as every man should be good, and patient, as every man should be patient, and victorious as every man should be victorious! As men generally conceive of Jesus, there is a want of imitableness, of tangibility, almost I fear of reality, in his example.

Now, I have said, in the first place, that the way to gain excellence is to meditate upon it, and thus to fill our minds with the glow of admiration and desire. And, in the second place, I have said that the character of our Saviour is the very realization of all our ideas of wisdom and goodness. And I have said it, of course, with the implied inference that this is, above all things, worthy of our meditation. And I have referred to the difficulties that surround it, as strengthening the argument for this very meditation. In truth, there is more reason for it than there was in the early age. In proportion as that living excellence is separated from us by distance of time, and is liable to fade away into abstraction and shadow, is there ever increasing reason for meditation; and, therefore, there is especial propriety in a permanent ordinance, which, with visible symbols, sets before us, from time to time, the living patience, the mortal pain, and the immortal triumph of our Master.

3. And, I proceed now, in the third place, to observe that there is a yet further and more especial propriety in the meditations to which this ordinance calls us, because our hardest struggle in life is with suffering and sorrow, with injury and wrong, with calamity and death.

Let us cast away all mystical ideas of this occasion, all preconcieved ideas of the Gospel, and all visionary ideas of life, and come, on each point, to the reality.

I find my lot cast in, whether I will or not, with a life of change and trial and many pains. I would be happy; but alas! I do not easily learn to be happy. Peace of mind, calm repose, sustained and unbroken satisfaction — how hard is it to reach them? Many burdens press upon every man; many collisions with untoward events, or

uncongenial persons, cut us to the quick; many wrongs and oppressions in society distress, and perhaps exasperate us. Bodily distemperature, too, — what a present, pressing, preying evil it is! And heart-aches, too, there are, — stings and tortures in the mind. Do what we will, life is a battle; every man must fight his way, every step. Whether he knows it or not, this is true. I suppose myself to know all this, and to feel the burdens of life to be heavy. And yet I feel all burdens to be *light* compared with the wrong state of my own mind. If I could bear injury with a forgiving spirit, and calamity with humble resignation to God, I could bear them bravely. But with many assaults on the one hand, and a weak faith on the other, life is often bo ne down by bitter suffering and sad depression. To all but the brutal or the thoughtless, it is often a struggle with sin and sorrow. Every man may not so describe his case; but this it is, — this combination of outward trial and inward defect, that makes him often, — what he knows he is, — troubled, uneasy, unhappy, disheartened, dissatisfied, weary, worn, and sorrowful. No reasoning can reason this away. It is sad reality. It is "the still sad music of humanity," sounding through the world.

Now, suppose any one thus conscious of what life is, to have fallen upon the rea ings, for the first time, of the life of Christ. Instantly he would feel that this was something to him, — was much, — was everything to him. "Here," he would say, "is he very type of my own humanity. Here is affliction, suffering, sorrow, injury, detraction, wrong, — a struggle with temptations and difficulties; and all sus ained with an evident inward serenity, courage, and joy. What meekness armed him

against hostility; what divine trust against calamity; what triumph bore him up amidst the depths of agony and the shadows of death! Neither surrounding tumult nor gathering terror entered into his *soul: there* all was calm, while the storm raged without; *there* all was blessedness, though the miseries of life, from a full cup, were given him to drink. But it was the cup which his Father gave him; it was the misery which Heaven's will ordained for his trial and his triumph; and it was received with a filial reliance, — it was received, as if he knew that which was afterwards recorded of him, that he was to be made perfect through sufferings." "Could I live like this being," would the meditative reader say, — "could I breathe his spirit; could I enter into his joy; surely then would the dark and painful problem of my life be solved into perfect light; the cloud would be lifted up, and the way of life — filled with care and toil and grief, and trodden with many heavy steps — would show like a way of triumph and glory."

I beg the reader to bring his mind to this point. I cannot go into instances of what Jesus was as a sufferer. But do you not see that whosoever should meditate upon the life of Christ, with a living sympathy; whosoever should be brought into a glowing admiration and love of his patience, gentleness, serenity, and holy self-forgetfulness and self-sacrifice; — whosoever should lay his heart, if I may speak so, to the heart of that divinest friend and Saviour, would be fast growing into his likeness — would be rapidly attaining to the truest wisdom and happiness of life? Christ's life is the exemplar of our life; and our special concern with it is to see in it the model of our own — to see how to live — to see it, in

everything, save its official grandeur, and, if I may so say, its circumstantial shadings — for there was in it, the high resolve, and the subdued, almost the saddened tone of a great enterprise, — to see it, I say, saving in some peculiar traits, as our example. The happy dwellers in a country are not to live precisely as did the solemn, sad, determined patriots, who, through suffering and death, wrought out its deliverance; but who would not pray that the essential virtues of those heroic and martyred fathers might dwell in their children?

Now, it is especially to a meditation on the sacrifice of Christ, on the truths disclosed and the virtues manifested in it, that the communion season invites us. "This do," says our Saviour, "in remembrance of me." And let me say, distinctly and emphatically, that it is only through this meditation, this remembrance of Christ, that we can receive the blessing he designed to communicate. It is not in any mystic way. There is no mysterious virtue in the act of communing. It is only by meditation, by fixed attention, that we can receive anything into our minds. Would you possess any virtue? Would you drink in the spirit of any life? What have you to do, — what *can* you do, but earnestly contemplate it.

Therefore does it seem to me good and meet, that all Christians; all who would indeed be Christians, should gather together, from time to time, in commemoration of the sacrifice, the patience, the forgiveness, and love of Jesus. Could but these simple virtues be wrought into any heart — how would all settle into peace there — into calm repose, and deep satisfaction, and divine blessedness!

Good has it often seemed to me, to enter into some an-

cient and venerable temple, whose altar-steps had been worn by the knees of pilgrims and penitents from far distant countries and ages; whose pavements had been trodden by successive generations; whose walls had grown hoary amidst the flight of centuries. An odor of sanctity seemed to fill the place. A solemn presence seemed to be there; the mind was carried up above the world; it was translated out of its ordinary and earthly frame; all worldly strifes and griefs died away; *that* was none other than the house of God,— it was the gate of heaven. But how much more do all earthly, all unholy passions die away, amidst that scene, brought down from the birth-time of Christianity itself, consecrated to its sublimest theme, its tenderest recollections, and its most inspiring promises! "For, as often," says our Saviour, "as ye do eat of this bread and drink of this cup, ye do show forth the Lord's death till he come." Let any one approach this scene; let him come, from whatsoever state or condition where the hard conflict of life is carried on; from the house of merchandise or from the abode of affliction,— from strifes with his neighbor, from contests of ambition, or the bustle and bitterness of a political canvass,— yes, let him come *with* his neighbor to this holy communion and commemoration; and will not the mild countenance and voice of the common Master, of the crucified one, speak to him salutary, solemn, and gracious lessons? Will it not be good for him to be here? Will not the spirit that breathes around this holy rite — this gathering place of all the Christian ages — this altar-place for prayer and penitence through centuries — this great symbol-rite that celebrates redeeming sorrow and peace-speaking blood, that sets forth the prostration of all earthly powers

and principalities before the majesty of forgiveness and love — will not all this raise the man above the world? Will it not make him feel the littleness of all human strifes, of all worldly pretensions, of all the passing fashions of this world? Truly, and strictly speaking, it is true — all that is evil in the world nowhere finds its grand antagonist principle so clearly and powerfully set forth, as in this very altar of communion.

Meet it is, then, that we gather around this altar. It is no vain, no idle ceremony; no arbitrary, no merely commanded institution. It is a simple commemoration, a simple meditation; so do I regard it; but no meditation on earth seems so needful, so pertinent to me, as a sinful and suffering creature, as that which is commended to me here. Neglected may this scene be, as unnecessary; or rejected, as unauthorized; yet, if I were left to the simple determination of my own judgment, of my own conscious needs, I should say, that nowhere in the world is there such reality to my feelings as here. I speak not of a form now, but of that which the form meaneth. And I say and verily believe, that the meanings of this holy rite have more to do with my happiness, than any other event, any other transaction, any other era, in the great train of human history. Suppose me only to feel these two things — that I must have this excellence of Christ, that I must have the spirit of the cross, or I cannot be happy; and that I can have this excellence only by meditation — that it can by no possibility be got in any other way — and then is not my conclusion, and my course a very plain one? And that I feel that I want this spirit, that I am sinful and unworthy — that my mind is daily exposed to break out into anger, or to sink in worldliness,

and sense,—is that any objection to my coming to bow my soul before the great example of purity and meekness, and the great testimony of God's forgiving pity? Nay, it is the very argument for my coming, provided I sincerely desire to conquer my pride and passion and sin in every form. The plea of unfitness should be given up for one of these reasons. If it is sad, and solemn, who does not see that it is no proper obstacle? If it is indifferent and worldly, it should be cast away as insincere. "But, ah!" says one, "I should be struck with horror to find myself seated at the communion!" Alas! the subject is surrounded with superstitions. Not in one generation, perhaps, are they to be removed, much less in a brief essay like this.

Yes, there are difficulties. Let us briefly consider them.

One says that he feels a kind of dread — almost of horror, at the thought of approaching this service. Why, I ask, this horror? What is there,— what can there be, more solemn in the act of communing, than in the act of praying? The latter is the most immediate approach to God. There is not, and there cannot be, an act in the universe, more justly fitted to fill us with awe, than that. And yet we come and put ourselves in the attitude of prayer, without any shrinking or dread. Be assured that there is, and there must be, some superstition about this rite of the Communion, that leads us to make such an irrational and unauthorized difference between it and everything else that is sacred. It was not so at the beginning. It was not intended to be so ever. Ages of error have distorted and darkened this simple and beautiful ceremonial, this sacrament of holy friendship, this rite

of the affections. There is an order of devotees known in the Catholic Church, as "children of the sacred heart." This is *the rite of the sacred heart.* Originally it was a memorial of Christ, an expression of religious veneration for his character, his teaching, his living patience, his dying pain, his triumphant resurrection. If any feel this sentiment now, why shall they not express it in the way he has sanctioned and blessed? There have been ages when men felt the same horror of *prayer*, as a personal and solitary offering. Many felt that they could not pray without the priest: that it would be sacrilege to pray without him! It is all superstition! It is the superstition of minds that are devoid of all sacred and blessed familiarity with things divine.

But, again, one may say, "the Communion is a bondage to me. I am not struck with any horror at participation I do not feel that this rite has any peculiar sanctity; it is no more sacred nor awful to me than the act of prayer. But still I feel a constraint about this rite. My thoughts do not easily mingle with it; my feelings do not freely flow in it; there seems to me something unnatural about it; it may have been easy to the ancients, with whom religious feasts were familiar, but eating and drinking seem to me to be strangely associated with the expression of religious sentiments; the elements, I feel to be in my way; they do not help, but hinder me. In short, if I can be a Christian — if I can cherish devout affections, without this rite, I should prefer to be excused from it." Such is the difficulty.

Now, in the first place, I do not urge upon it the *command* — which might be thought to put an end to all difficulties; because it is not a feeling of disobedience

with which I am contending, but a feeling of bondage *in* obedience. The objector, I suppose, to be a devout man; he wishes to "walk in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless;" but he feels a difficulty about this ordinance in particular; a difficulty which seems to him peculiarly modern, and which leads him almost to doubt, whether the command could have been intended for all ages.

In the next place, I do not feel warranted to threaten the neglecter of this rite, with perdition. I do not say that salvation depends upon this, more than upon any other rite; more than upon private prayer or public worship. The question really is, in my opinion, not whether this rite is necessary to save a man, but whether it is fitted to *help* a man in his religion. A man may say, he has difficulties about *prayer;* and many have difficulties. Shall I fail, therefore, to urge it upon him, as a thing very essential to his religious growth? A youth may dislike a particular branch of study; he may say that it is a burden and bondage to him. But you may see that it is very important to his thorough education, and you may therefore well urge it upon him; for although he may be educated, he cannot be so well educated without it. So in religion: we may not say to the neglecters of the communion — to the Society of Friends, for instance, or to those who imitate them — you have no religion and can have none, without this rite; but we may say, have you not left out of your discipline, one important means of religion?

This, then, being the ground taken — what upon this ground have we to say to those who feel these difficulties? In reply to this question, I would desire them fairly to

consider these difficulties; to consider, first, whether they are not, in fact, irrational and superstitious; next, whether they do not belong to a piety too generalizing and lax; and, finally, whether deeper views of life and duty would not bring them over to another feeling, and make the Communion meditation most natural and grateful to them.

First, is not the objection irrational and superstitious? Are not the constraint and bondage you feel your own fault, and therefore to be corrected? You feel nothing of this when you go to an entertainment to celebrate a birth-day, or to commemorate some great event, or some great man, signalized in the history of the country. You do not then say, that eating and drinking are strangely associated with the expression of a sentiment. If you feel this in religion, then I say, you do not put yourself on the ground of nature but off from it, your feeling is not natural, but artificial and superstitious. It is because the occasion is *religious* that you feel thus — thus unnaturally in fact; and this is the very essence of superstition. In the Lord's Supper we celebrate the greatest event in the world; the consummation of the grandest story that the world ever heard; we celebrate it with less ministering to the body indeed, but in a manner nevertheless substantially accordant with the usages, not only of ancient but of modern times.

In the next place, I pray you to consider whether there is not something too generalizing in the religious feeling that is averse to the Communion? Does it come sufficiently near to Christ, I will not say in the Communion, but in any way? A personal reference and regard to him, is a part of our religion. To bring near to us his very life, his very death, and the very spirit and manner

of his living and dying, is a leading feature of the great discipline of Christianity Abstractions of truth there had been before; the world wanted a Saviour: systems of truth; the world wanted a life. Doubtless, at first, the danger was that of making too much of Christ as a mere person, and that danger has continued long. But now, in the reaction from those views, the danger is of too much generalizing: of sinking the historical view of Jesus into a vague spiritualizing about him, and of thinking this spirituality all-sufficient. The truth of Jesus is not all that commends him to us; the life of Jesus is more. Not then, when Jesus taught, was spiritual truth first taught; but then was it first lived in perfection. To the living and dying Jesus, therefore, must the disciples of Christianity especially and stedfastly look; and to this view are they emphatically held by the rite of the Communion. It dismisses abstract excellence, and sets before us the model of living and dying virtue. It bids us have done with generalities and follow Christ. Good Christians enough are we perhaps, *in the general;* but do we follow Christ? Many admire him, but few follow him. "Many are called, but few are chosen."

Once more, and finally, I have asked if there are not deeper views of life, which commend to us the meditation and the vow which are implied in the Communion. In nothing does life seem to me to be less understood, than in the depth, the power, the might, the awfulness that belong to it. We think it something trivial, superficial, worldly; but it is not so, and never can be. The wisest of us are apt to be fancy-beguiled in this matter. Look at yonder country cottage, on a green bank; a sheltering wood on one side; on the other a sparkling stream; and

around, a small domain of waving grain-fields, and pastures covered with flocks! Does it not seem to you that it is the very bosom of peace and quiet enjoyment? Does it not seem to you as if worldly passions had retired from that peaceful spot, and all within were serenity and happiness? And so you think, perhaps, that you will one day go and live there. But be not deceived. There, even there, is carried on the inward strife of passions, desires, hopes, fears, that fill every human bosom. There, every day, is a spiritual struggle; conscience and pride and sense and, perhaps, tongues of discord are in fearful contention. And what is *there*, is *here*, — is everywhere. Everywhere life embosoms an awful experience. Everywhere it is beset with dread foes. Everywhere a fearful destiny presses upon it. It is a land of probation and of peril through which we walk.

Now, in such a pilgrimage, I deem it good to come, from time to time, to a place — to an altar, which sets before me the consummation of that great work by which God has designed to redeem us from the greatest evils of life — from that which only, in comparison, is evil — from the power of evil passons. I deem it good to come there to meditate and pray. I deem it good to come there, and to vow obedience to my life's leader and Redeemer. I would come to it, and would say, "O altar, on which my Saviour was slain! upon thee would I swear fidelity; erring, wandering, forgetful, here would I renew the great vow of life; here, in suffering, in sorrow, in death, did Jesus conquer — through meekness, through love, through forgiveness; so let me conquer; I am poor, I am weak, I am unworthy; help me, O thou mighty power of

God, according to the promise which thou hast sealed in blood upon this holy altar; —

'Guide me, O thou Great Jehovah!
Pilgrim through this barren land:
I am weak, but thou art mighty;
Hold me with thy powerful hand.
Bread of Heaven! Bread of Heaven!
Feed me till I want no more.'"

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"HOW IS IT THAT YE HAVE NO FAITH?"

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"HOW IS IT THAT YE HAVE NO FAITH?"

Mark iv. 40.

And he said unto them, How is it that ye have no faith?

There is a no more simple word in our language than the word faith. We are never at a loss to understand its meaning, whenever it occurs in books or common conversation. I shall spend no time, therefore, in endeavoring to define what is clear without any words of explanation, and shall take throughout this discourse that common meaning of this word which we give to it in every-day conversation — an earnest, hearty feeling, which prompts man to try, to do. The subject which I would take up and follow out as I may be able, is this question which Jesus asked, why is it that we have no more faith? Why is it that we do not feel a more earnest desire to seek religion, to understand it, to feel it, to enjoy it, to press forward in it?

And when I first ask this question, it seems to me as if there must be some hidden deep reason for man's indifference to religion, which has never yet been fully stated or explained. For is it not true that every motive that we can possibly conceive of urges him to feel interested in religion? and yet how many have no faith. It is not

generally pretended that there is any deficiency in the evidences that prove to the understanding the truths of religion or of Christianity. Here and there you will find a man, the turn of whose mind is so peculiar, or whose situation in life has been so adverse to fair inquiry, that he gives no intellectual assent to religious truths. He throws them all away from him as if they were conjectures and dreams. But this is the case with but a very small number. Religious truths rest on so stable a foundation, that nearly all, from the profoundest intellects to the humblest minds in the community, assent to them. It is not pretended that they are not well established — that they are doubtful, and that thus men are justified in withholding their concern from them. The community, I repeat, receives them, men and women around us believe in them; it is one of the clearest of well-settled things, that by all fair argument they must be assented to. And yet here, with this assent these truths too often rest. They are not, with the great majority, objects of a deep, hearty interest. They play round the head, but to most persons come not near the heart. For all that the understanding sees them to be truths, the greatest and most important of all truths, still we must inquire, how is it that ye have no more faith?

We see further cause for surprise in this matter if we look at it in another point of view. Man's nature, we know, is a mixed one, having the germs both of good and evil in it; yet of this we are well assured, that it was made for religion. In all men's hearts there are religious wants which do at times make themselves felt — there are religious fears — religious hopes. How often does man see that he is dependent upon a power higher

than himself. How often, when events are ordered in some remarkable manner, will the feeling spring up at once in his heart, that verily there *is* a righteous providence in the affairs of the world, and in the affairs of his life. Standing at the grave of a dear friend, it is a deep instinct of our natures which assures us that there is another shore of being where we and the departed shall again meet. Coming forth from a bed of sickness to the strengthening air and welcome face of nature, what a thrill of gratitude to the great Preserver trembles upon every nerve. Nor is it at such seasons as these alone that we feel ourselves allied to a higher power and another world. It seems as if it were suggested to us by invisible voices in the air in our lone hours of retirement and meditation, yea, it is whispered by a voice in our own heart, which often summons man's thoughts, without his effort, and sometimes without his *wish*, to think on these things. But from religious subjects his thoughts soon wander off. The impressions which peculiar events of God's providence make upon his heart are soon obliterated, like marks upon the sand washed by the tide. The religious instincts, hopes, and fears, of his nature, are consciously felt but for a moment in his heart, and the great question is still left before us, why is it that men who are *made* for religion, who do at times feel the *need* of religion, who are often conscious of something within them which invites and prompts them to a religious spirit, why is it that they have no more faith?

There is still another consideration that increases the difficulty of this question. If it could be *proved*, or should be generally *suspected*, that religion is unfriendly to man's true happiness in this world, and does not qual-

ify him for a higher destiny in the world to come, men would certainly be justified in their indifference to its claims. If this was the fact of religion, we would not then ask why men have no more faith; we should feel that they were right in having so little faith, that they were right in attending, firstly and chiefly, to mere worldly things, and in entertaining that unconcern which, to so great a degree, prevails. But this is not a fact of religion; not a *proved* fact, not even a *suspected* fact. Quite on the other hand, the very men and women around us, whose little faith in religion surprises us, will themselves admit that true religion is and must be one of the fountains of man's highest enjoyment on earth, and his only safe preparation for the world beyond the grave. They themselves have reason which leads them to know, and have had observation which has permitted them to see, that nothing else helps man to bear sickness and sorrow, disappointments and trials, as religion does, that nothing else can inspire such cheerful confidence as religious trust, nothing else gild the future like religious hope, nothing else so keep one's spirits up as the thought of well-discharged religious duty. They see, therefore, and admit, that it is true, hearty religion only, which gives a joy which the world cannot give, and cannot take away; and that hence it has the promise of the life that now is, as they know that that alone has the promise of the life that is to come. And yet — here is the perplexing question — why is it that they have no more faith? Why is it that when it is admitted that religion is the light, the guide, the medicine of life, our only sure support, our only unfailing hope, why is it that we do not all seek it

with a holier zeal, do not cling to it with a warmer love, do not obey it with a more constant and devoted service?

I would not, for the sake of presenting a strong case, I would not in the least exaggerate the amount of religious indifference that prevails. I would not represent our want of faith to be in the slightest degree greater than it is. I do not believe, for instance, that the former times were better than these in this respect. I know that there are many signs in these latter days that make good and wise men think that our generation is fast losing the religious spirit of our fathers, and that all hearty faith is dying out from our community. To these signs I give a different interpretation, and do not, therefore, join in this most saddening view. The men of our times do not very strongly sympathize with *the manifestations* of the religious spirit peculiarly dear to our fathers, with outward observances, rites, and forms; with a sobriety and severity that made life one continual penance. This is true. The *manifestations* of a religious faith are always changing. It is only in times of universal darkness, when all progress is denied, that they remain, even from one generation to another, the same. But because the form varies, the *spirit* has not fled. It weaves for itself other garments. It finds other language by which to express itself — other modes of manifestation in which to live and move and have its being. And we should be ungrateful to a good providence if we for a moment felt that a religious faith has assumed among us no manifestations which denote a hopeful state of activity, and which are peculiar to our times alone. We certainly see such, and we would thankfully acknowledge them, in the before unknown activity that has been given to the charitable

and benevolent feelings of our nature, which have sent so many thousand impulses into every sphere and walk of beneficence. This is doubtless *the* manifestation of a religious spirit peculiar to us. It is better than that which was peculiar to our fathers. And our manifestation of it, suggested, developed, vivified, by religion, and instinct with it as at this moment it is, ought to give us, I think, the cheering belief that a spiritual faith has as strong a hold upon our community, as it ever had upon any community within the period of our history. For myself I have no doubt that it has.

And then, again, I rejoice to believe that in estimating the amount of existing indifference to religion, we are all liable to deception. Down in the deep heart of society, religion is more an object of serious thought, than it appears to be, when we look only upon the careless surface of society. That man, who, in his outward life, in the scenes of his business or his pleasures, seems so utterly hardened to all spiritual things, even he has his moments of retirement — his sleepless hours by night. And a spirit will pass over his mind, and knock upon his conscience and his heart, and the thought will enter that these things after all *may* be true, and may concern him infinitely more than the objects of his daily chase. That woman who to our eyes seems to live only for pleasure and fashion, cannot spend all her time in the gay circle, and in empty mirth. She, too, has her hours of loneliness and reflection — when a sense of the hollowness of all she thinks of and cares for will strike like an arrow through her heart, and make it feel that it is perishing through its long neglected wants. And then the visitations of providence, sickness, death, and bereavement,

enter all households, and must carry some spiritual lessons home to all hearts. I have before remarked how quickly these lessons are forgotten, how little fruit they bring forth. But then the facts I have now noticed, do prove to us that in the most private and secret experience of all hearts there is a little spiritual life left, even among those with whom it might at first seem that all sense of it was utterly dead and gone.

While, then, in the spirit of him who did not break the bruised reed, and did not quench the smoking flax, I would be careful how I pronounced even the most careless, utterly seared and insensible, while I would take no disheartening views of the religious state of our community, while I would be cautious lest I should make exaggerated and evil, because false, statements of the religious indifference that prevails, still it is true, that there is a want of faith which would surprise us were it not so common, which is for this very reason is so lamentable, and which the more we think of it ought to engage our attention and awaken our alarm. Men are generally convinced by the outward evidences which prove the truths of religion; corresponding to this outward proof, they find, when in their serious experience they turn within, an inward consciousness that they were *made* for religion, and that they *need* religion; and they know and acknowledge that religion alone can be their unfailing peace in this world, and the fair star of their hope for the life to come. And yet what *is* their real actual faith? I will not adduce as a proof of their great want of faith that the Sabbath is no better reverenced, that the public altars of our religion are not more frequently and fully surrounded, that the ways of our Zion are so often left to

mourn because so few come to her solemn feasts. I admit that these are not the fairest tests. Custom, fashion, and the ever varying opinions of men, may have much influence in drawing them *to* these, or in turning their feet *from* them. But I will take men in the world, in the places of their business, where they act out their real selves, and show to all what spirit they are of, and *there*, among all the mass of motives and principles and objects that fill up their hearts, how many marks do you find of a spiritual religious faith? Should a spirit from some other planet alight upon this earth, and come among us with a knowledge of the brief term of man's life, and of his infinite interests connected with the world to come, when it saw what we are all struggling for, with so much of our hearts, day after day, and year after year, could it believe, that a consciousness of our spiritual relations had ever once entered as a reality into most of our hearts? Ah! if it had come home to us as a reality would it not have produced effects which we do not now observe? Would it not have banished that spirit of selfishness which still bears so wide and mighty sway? Would it not have healed that diseased thirst for gain, which taints our whole land, and whose cravings has driven out reason and conscience from so many hearts? And the rivalries and jealousies of life, the force of passion, the violence of ambition, and that absorbing concern in what relates to our present interest and pleasures — what do these things prove but that the power of the Prince of this world rules, and exclude the dominion of a religious faith in our hearts. As a reality by how few is religion yet felt. It is not a reality like the laws of nature, or the truths of science. If it was, we should just as soon think of

throwing our bodies from a precipice, as casting our souls from the supports of justice, truth, integrity, uprightness; we should just as soon think of slaking our thirst with burning ashes, as imagining we could ever bring one feeling of satisfaction to our hearts, by the wages of sin.

How is it, then, that we have no more faith? This question still remains unanswered. As yet we have only spoken of the general indifference to the claims of religion that prevails, and suggested some considerations which make it difficult to reply to the inquiry of the text. To that inquiry what answer shall now be given?

I remarked in the beginning, that when we first look at this question, it seems as if there must be some hidden, deep reason for man's want of faith, which has never yet been fully stated or explained. So it does seem when we look to men and women around us. We have seen that they have every motive that we can conceive of for a hearty faith, and yet that faith they do not possess. There is another way, however, of looking at this subject: and instead of asking why men and women around us have so little faith, let us each ask our own hearts, why have I so little faith? To settle the question of the text, we want to enter that secret chamber where motives are weighed, and the will decides. We can do this only by turning in, to our own consciousness, and opening the doors of our own hearts. And we may be assured that what we find true of ourselves, will hold true of men and women around us, for their case is just like our own. And, my friends, when, in the spirit of a strict self-searching which perhaps you do not feel now while I am speaking, but which you do feel in some most serious moments of your lives, when in *that* spirit you enter the innermost cham-

bers of your hearts, and ask yourself, why am I so indifferent to religion, you will find, that, after all, there are no mysterious reasons for your little faith which your conscience renders unto you, but plain and obvious ones, which fully account for your neglect, and for the neglect of all around you. And after much serious reflection, and after placing myself in the situation of different persons in a community enjoying Christian privileges like this, if I do not altogether read amiss my own heart, these plain and obvious reasons can be only these three. And first, the reason that some have no more faith may be a want of serious consideration. There may be such persons among us, who from some unhappy circumstances of their education or life have never given the subject of religion an hour's deliberate consideration. The existence of religion in the land, of preaching, of worship, of the ideas of accountability and retribution, all present themselves to these persons, only as certain *phenomena*, the reason and meaning of which they take no more pains to understand, than they do the phenomena of the shifting of the clouds, the changes of the wind, the rising of the tides, or the falling of the dew. This is a cause of insensibility to religion often alluded to in the Scriptures, and its words of lamentation are, *my people will not consider.*

If this reason will not account for *your* want of faith, my hearers, there may be one other which meets your particular case. You may have had hours and hours when you have given the subject of religion a most serious consideration, and then — and this is the *second* reason to which I have alluded — you have *postponed* a devoted obedience to it, till some future time. I ap-

prehend that this is the case with most of those for whose present indifference to religion we are attempting to account. Its unspeakable importance, its infinite interests, in some rare moments of their lives, have been felt in their inmost hearts. They cannot think of dying without it, and they know and feel that there is an hour coming when they would give away the whole world, for their souls. But then — it is not of such consequence just at this moment. To-morrow will be as this day. They may go for a year, and buy and sell and get gain. And thus they live for this world alone, without a religious faith, trusting to what they hope and mean to do at some future time. This cause also of neglect is frequently alluded to in the Scriptures, and was exemplified in the memorable instance of him who though trembling with fear, could say, "go thy way for this time, when I have a more convenient season I will call for thee."

And now, my friends, if neither of these cases meets your case, I can think of but one other cause for your want of faith which can possibly exist. And this cause I almost hesitate to name. You may not allow it to be the cause that has operated with you. But ask yourself, if the reason of your present insensibility has not been before explained, is it not true that this must be its cause? It is briefly this, that though you have had your hours of serious consideration of religion, yet your final choice and purpose is, not to devote yourself, heart and life, to its claims. You like your present tastes, your present habits, your present life — at least the changes you wish for, and mean to bring about, do not run in the direction of that thorough and entire change which religion demands of you. And as you find that one year passes

away pretty much like another, you will live as you now do, till they have all run by, and then — abide the result.

I do not say that any one has written all this out as a rule of his life, I do not say that he has even dared to say it in so many words to himself, but this I do say, that this, as I have now expressed it, is the practical fact. It is what his life says — it is what his death will testify; and the Scriptures likewise make mention of this cause why men have so little faith, for they speak of those who are so much at ease in their situations, that they say we will not have the Lord to reign over us.

If I have not now erred in supposing that we must and do all see how strong are the claims of religion upon our deepest concern, you cannot, I think, fail to observe, that there is not one of these causes of the insensibility which most men feel, which does not involve the imputation of guilt. I mean just what these words express, that a man's indifference to religion does of itself involve him in guilt. It is the guilt of a heedless inconsideration. He hears that his Maker has laid his laws upon him, and he will not stop in his career to learn what these laws are, and to know under what fearful responsibilities he holds the gift of life, and the trust of man's privileges and hopes. If it be not this, it is the guilt of deliberately putting away the duty of to-day, which never can be discharged when to-day is gone, to some future and uncertain time; and this, too, when he knows that the present moment is in God's sight just as important, and must render for itself just as solemn account, as if it were the last moment of his life. Or, finally, if it be not either of these, it is the deeper guilt of choosing and preferring his own manner of life, to the laws and commandments of God. And,

therefore, if for any of these reasons we do indulge ourselves in an unconcern about our spiritual interests — though I am not used to the language of fear, still less of threatening — it is assuredly true that we put in jeopardy our everlasting interests and — why should I refrain from saying it — we do it at our peril.

From that peril, my friends, how may we escape? The door is open, and the way is plain. In the sincerity of an honest heart, and in humble reliance upon the grace of Almighty God, we must resolve to attend *now* to the things that concern our peace. Our religious nature may be educated. We can do it, just as truly as we can educate our intellectual nature, just as truly as we can change our habits, preferences, and tastes. It is unimportant that I speak of the means. The first great want is a determined and persevering will. From the midst of our selfishness and worldliness the spiritual man may yet be reclaimed. The longer we defer the more our habits become welded as in bands of iron and steel.

And it does seem that if we only realized the value of a hearty religious faith we should count all things but loss if we might gain that. Indeed for man's well-being it is the one thing needful. Take that away, and you take away the meaning and dignity of life, take it away, and the Universe is without a Father, and man becomes an orphan. Give him this faith, and the solemn purpose of life is revealed to him, you lay an imperishable basis for all his virtues, and give him a motive by which he can cheerfully do and suffer. You give him a Father whom he can trust through ill and through good, whom he may dare to meet on the bed of sickness, and beyond the grave.

Brethren, we need this faith to convert our worldly hearts, we must have it if we would escape the guilt of neglecting so great a salvation. And unto Him who can work in us both to will and to do of his good pleasure, and who has promised of his grace to help our infirmities, let our prayer be, Lord, increase our faith.

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DOMESTIC WORSHIP.

By CALEB STETSON.

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DOMESTIC WORSHIP.

Prayer is the natural expression of religious sentiment. But there is a mode of philosophizing that tends to discourage and suppress the instinct of devotion. We often hear it said that "we have no need to pray, because God knows all our wants, and is always willing to satisfy them, — so far as they ought to be satisfied, — without our asking." We may admit the truth of the statement without accepting the inference. He does, indeed, know what we need better than we do ourselves; and he is ever full of benignity and love. We must consider, however, that it is not the design of his government that we should passively receive, but *create* rather, the good we enjoy. What we obtain is less important to our highest well-being than what we do and what we are. He does good to us chiefly by means of what he has enabled us to do for ourselves. His providence blesses us through our virtues and our efforts. By the activity of our souls the higher wants of our being are satisfied, — the lower, by the work of our hands. We toil outwardly for our daily bread, — inwardly for the bread of eternal life. In

neither case is the gift arbitrary or unconditional; we recognize a law; we receive good, as we do evil, according to the unchangeable relation of cause and effect. We pray not as supposing the Father to be ignorant or regardless of our wants; but because it is his law, written in our nature and in his revelation, that some of his best gifts should be connected with our prayers; so connected, that we are twice blessed in receiving them; blessed by the favor which the act of faith procures, and blessed in the humble and trusting spirit from which the prayer proceeded.

It is said again, that we need not pray, because "God is unchangeable; we cannot alter his plans, and there is something like irreverence in the attempt." To this we answer, that we make no such attempt; we have no desire to change the immutable purposes of the Almighty. But we distinguish between what is settled by the laws of nature, and what is in its own nature contingent. The movements of material bodies, which have no power of choice or self-direction, are determined by inflexible laws. The planets wheel round the sun in their everlasting courses, and no petition of ours could arrest their flight, or divert them from their appointed career; for their orbits are fixed; but the orbit of a man is not so fixed; there are things which, for aught we see, depend on his will; within finite limits he can choose his path and direct his way. We move about, we act, we interfere with the plans and movements of others. We are subordinate causes under the Great First Cause. We do many things, we change many things at our pleasure; the outward world yields to our forces; we make the elements of nature our servants to do our bidding. We put forth our

muscular strength, and certain effects follow. We dig up the ground and make it clothe itself with beauty; we scatter seeds, and flowers spring up along our path. We have the evidence of our consciousness, that God has made us sovereigns within our finite domain of matter. He has given us power, also, to work changes in the spiritual world. We move men by our influence, and make them serve our purposes. The hungry child prays to his mother for bread, and she gives it. A poor man in the street implores relief from our charity, discouraged by no metaphysical doubt, and yet we do not see that the philosophical argument against prayer to God for what we need, is not equally good against the supplication of the beggar. For if nothing in the system of the universe is contingent, then is our almsgiving among the events which no importunity could change.

Since God has given us power to produce effects according to our will, — to grant or reject a petition offered to us, — why should it be supposed that he has reserved no such power for himself? Is he dead? Has he dismissed the machinery of the universe from his care? Or has he so hampered himself by his decrees, that he cannot do any thing in answer to our supplications? If our health, comfort, and thrift depend upon our exertions, if we are able to make or mar our prosperity as we will, why may not something depend upon our petitions to the Supreme Ruler? If his immutable laws hinder not the effect of our actions, why should they hinder the effect of our prayers? Why may they not be the procuring cause of blessings that we want? If there is nothing contingent, then it is predetermined, whether we shall eat or starve; and why should we exhaust our energies in vain

struggles, beating against the bars of an iron destiny? Why should we labor, save, stint ourselves, to gather up a store for time of need? If we *are* to have any thing, we *shall* have it work or not work. We do not accept this theory of the Divine Government. We believe that the *everliving* Father can grant the suppliant his prayer as well as the farmer his corn. Undoubtedly there may be improper supplications, that will not be granted, as there are misdirected labors, which yield no good result. Our prayers and our exertions are justified by the same principle, and proceed from the same faith in the ever-active providence of God.

After all, the subject is wrapped in mysteries that we cannot penetrate. We feel, however, that it is safe to follow the highest instincts of the soul, and these lead us to the throne of Infinite Power and Love. The religious heart breathes out its irrepressible emotions to the Father in filial trust, though it is unable to trace out the connection between the prayer and the blessing desired.

But when our prayers are offered, as they chiefly should be, for inward, spiritual good, we are perplexed by no such difficulties. We go to the Father in our weakness, sorrow, or temptation, believing that the humble prayer of faith will bring its own answer. The very act of the soul will give you divine consolation and strength. "If any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God." The asking implies the calm reflection, the freedom from unworthy biases, the singleness of heart which *are* the best wisdom. When we pray for a meek and gentle temper, and a spirit of love and good-will, the prayer we offer will do much to create the dispositions we desire to cherish. We long to be delivered from the power and bondage of sin;

we humble ourselves before God, and give sincere utterance to the sorrows of repentance; and by this spiritual act we kindle up in our souls an earnest desire of a better life, — we more and more do hunger and thirst after righteousness till we are filled.

"Every one that asketh receiveth." This is not the declaration of a new law, but the statement of a truth as old as the creation of man. God has established an everlasting connection between the prayers of men and the spiritual good they desire, so that the wish and the object bear to each other the relation of cause and effect. It is not our design to exhaust this great subject, which involves such profound philosophical considerations. We wish only to place it before our readers as it appears to us from a single point of view.

What, then, is the essence of prayer, or in other words, what is the element that gives it its chief value and power? It cannot be the utterance of our wishes in words, for God knows them before they are formed; nor the confession of our sins, for no unholy thought or purpose of the soul has escaped his notice. It is not that our prayers can soften or change his dispositions towards us, for nothing can make them kinder or more merciful than they are. The value of prayer consists not so much in its effect upon God as in its effect upon ourselves. In its essence, it is not an outward act, but an inward sense of want. The genuine prayer of faith is a spiritual exercise, not articulate speech. It is the secret communing of man with the indwelling Divinity. It is the yearning of a holy soul, that rises above the earth to seek its heavenly rest. When we enter into spiritual union with God, and are able to appreciate his near and intimate

presence, our souls pour out the fervent and effectual prayer, though no breath of devotion escapes our lips. All holy wishes are prayers of faith, which God will answer. The devout man is not always one who most abounds in outward acts of worship, who eagerly runs, in season and out of season, to every place where prayer is to be offered; he is a devout man, who habitually cherishes the sentiments of Heaven, and longs to be partaker of the Divine life. In his soul is the temple of God; and he is careful to shut out the vile affections and dishonest thoughts that would desecrate it.

But since the essence of prayer lies in the inward feeling, and not in the outward expression of our wants, the question is put, "why should our devout sentiments ever take a form of words?" We answer, that actual prayer is adapted to meet the highest necessities of our being. The spirit of devotion would languish and die, if it were shut up in the solitary heart, and denied all utterance. Our holiest sentiments assume no definite shape, till we clothe them in words. Language is not only the instrument by which we communicate what passes within us, but it reacts also upon our minds, giving distinctness and force to what was before obscure and feeble.

This may be illustrated by the phenomena of the coarser passions. By resolute silence we may subdue them; we exasperate them by free utterance. Suspicion is aggravated into confident belief, resentment into rage and fury by reiterated detail. In like manner the frequent expression of our devout affections will give them intenser activity, and cause them to grow into settled habits of the soul. Often the pure and fresh feelings of

the young, innocent heart, wither away in their first exposure to the blighting influence of the world, for want of a friend, to whom they might be communicated in the confidence of a perfect sympathy. That lonely, orphaned heart has not found its Father. The germs of early piety perish before they are unfolded in beauty and strength, because its wants and desires have not been poured out before God in filial love and trust. If every good feeling and thought could be shaped out and embalmed in fitting words, and given back to the heart in its hours of serious meditation, they would form an accumulating treasure of holy sentiments. The fugitive emotions, which would else pass away like cloud-shadows upon the water, and leave no trace behind, would strike deep and ineffaceable impressions into the soul.

Thus do language and emotion act reciprocally upon each other; and the same relation exists between language and thought. They are alternately cause and effect. Words, which have been employed to express religious ideas, react upon the mind by the power of suggestion, calling forth other ideas, profounder, more original, more spiritual. The more valuable treasures, which are buried in the deep places of the soul, are drawn out by secret links of association with commonplace thoughts, that lie near the surface.

These facts in our experience explain, we think, how secret prayer is adapted to promote our spiritual culture. The utterance of devout sentiment gives depth and power to the holy affections, which bind all good beings in the universe to each other, and to their God. "Ask," said Jesus, "and ye shall receive." Ask what? Not this or that imaginable good, — but sit at the feet of Wisdom,

waiting and longing for communications of Divine light and love, until this word *ask* expresses the habit of your soul, and then will all spiritual blessings flow into it.

The articulate expression of the wants of the soul not only reacts upon ourselves; but it has a similar effect upon other minds and hearts, that are in spiritual sympathy with our own. Words are symbols of religious thought and emotion. They are means of unfolding, multiplying, and perpetuating in ourselves, and waking up in others, the purest and holiest sentiments of our nature. If, then, we have ever found in our prayers any comfort, or spiritual growth, or Divine peace, why should we not deem it an unspeakable privilege, as well as a duty, to gather round the family altar those who are nearest and dearest to us, and to join with them in the expression of our common wants? How powerfully are the influences of domestic worship, when the flame of devotion, first kindled up in one humble soul, catches from heart to heart till all are animated by one spirit, and breathe out one deep-felt prayer to the great Father, "who setteth the solitary in families." God has instituted all human relations, and religion sheds over them the beauty of holiness. The home of our affections, with all its endearments and blessed charities, is his gift; and shall we not consecrate it to his worship? We are told that there are many households from which no voice of prayer or thanksgiving goes up to the giver of all good. Can it be true? Have they no sense of want, or of gratitude? Are they willing to live "without God in the world?" If we considered only man's obligations to the Author of all he enjoys and all he hopes, we should hardly permit ourselves to doubt

that an altar for his worship was set up in every family and in every heart. But we are compelled to own, that mankind are fearfully estranged from God. It is a matter of grief and shame that there are many Christian households, — nominally such at least, — in which religion has no settled and acknowledged place. We do not mean to deny that it may possibly exist in the heart without this outward sign ; but it is robbed of its just authority! It should be the central light of our dwellings ; it should sanctify and bless all our domestic relations and sympathies ; it should be a living presence, a guardian angel, comforting age in its helplessness, supporting manhood in its integrity, and breathing round the young an atmosphere of heavenly influences.

We have met with persons who deny that family prayer is a duty, because Jesus never in express terms enjoined it upon his disciples. But he found it a settled usage among religious men of his country, and he left it undisturbed. The patriarch of elder time was in his own house a "priest after the order of Melchizedec." The ancient custom was perpetuated because it had its origin in the natural wants of the human soul ; and surely a natural duty is not less obligatory than a positive institution. The Gospel aims not to direct our actions in detail, but to develop in the soul those Divine affections, from which all Christian virtues and all holy worship proceed. Devout men have always sought communion with God, and how natural it was to invite those who were dearest to them to share in its blessings. Jesus seems always to have taken it for granted that his disciples would pray, and accordingly his instructions have regard chiefly to the spirit of their devotions.

Many heads of families, who desire to live religiously, feel a difficulty in establishing family worship. They have a false modesty, that shrinks from a holy service which they have never attempted. Unused to extemporaneous speech of any kind, they distrust their ability to clothe their devotional sentiments in appropriate and connected language. But humble and earnest men will soon overcome this difficulty, when the offering of prayer in the presence of others is no longer a strange and unfamiliar service. A sincere desire to train up their families under the shadow of the Divine protection will give them courage and resolution to throw off this oppressive diffidence. We would say to such persons, persevere ; be not afraid ; commune with God and your own heart in secret ; and " while you are musing the fire of devotion will burn." If you reflect seriously upon your wants, infirmities, and sore temptations, and give free utterance in private to the soul that crieth out for the living God, your deepest emotions will spontaneously clothe themselves in the natural language of prayer. You will not be nice and anxious about phrases and sentences, but be content with the simplest expression of your feelings. In the secret chambers of the soul, where " the spirit maketh intercession with groanings that cannot be uttered," you will learn not to *make prayers,* but to pray. Meditate upon the Infinite Goodness that sends blessing and bounty to you through so many channels ; think of your domestic relations, of the happiness they impart, the affections they cherish, the duties they impose ; think of Christ, and his redemption, of the Gospel, with its peace and love and hope and power ; dwell much in this region of serene and holy

thought ; meditate on these things and make them subjects of earnest prayer in the lone retirement of your soul, and you will soon be rich in the sentiment and language of devotion. Every day, as it brings you new proofs of God's goodness and love, and higher experiences of religion, will open new fountains of emotion, and give fresh utterances to the longings of a pious heart.

If, however, any one is unable, or imagines himself unable, to conduct this service extemporaneously, let him not, therefore, neglect his family worship. Let him avail himself of forms adapted to meet his wants. Let him study them diligently, enter with warm sympathy into the sentiments and feelings of the author, make them his own, and then read them with earnest sincerity in his family. The desires of a pious heart will not be less acceptable to the Father because they go up to him in words borrowed from a kindred spirit. Many Christians believe that it is best always to use such aids in family devotion. That is not our opinion. We prefer that every prayer should be the fresh and simple expression of the present emotions and desires of the soul. But reading prayers with the spirit of fervent piety is a good, — if not the best, — mode of domestic worship. Only keep the sacred fire burning in your heart, that the prayer may be your own, full of life and warmth, and it will rise as grateful incense to the throne of God, and bring down spiritual blessings.

Many families are deprived of their natural heads, by the absence or death of the father ; and the delicacy of woman often shrinks from conducting the devotions of the household without the aid of forms. Shall the family altar, then, be deserted ? Shall the fire kindled upon it

be quenched, when your loneliness gives you the more need of its warmth and light? Shall your children and domestics be left to believe that you no longer have a God, because the voice, that was wont to speak to him in supplication and praise, is silent in the grave? Will the widowed mother, placed by her heart-breaking bereavement at the head of her family, have less need of the consolations of faith, when her house is thus left unto her desolate? Where can her wounded affections find relief when her best earthly friend is gone, if she does not seek it in the God of the widow and the fatherless? With profound sympathy we would say to her, let not these fatherless ones grow up orphans indeed, without knowing and loving their Father in Heaven. Let them see that he is your joy and trust, that you have made Christ your portion and hope; and you may lead their young and innocent affections to that kindest, best of friends, who took little ones like them in his arms, and blessed them, and said, "of such is the kingdom of heaven." Thus you will make your house a holy temple, sanctified by the Divine presence. And it will be the abode of harmony and joy; for every amiable and generous affection is daily nourished by communion with the God of love and peace.

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THE

APPARENT DARKNESS

OF

GOD'S PROVIDENCE.

BY JOHN BRAZER, D. D.

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THE APPARENT DARKNESS

OF

GOD'S PROVIDENCE.

JOHN XIII. 7.

WHAT I DO THOU KNOWEST NOT NOW; BUT THOU SHALT KNOW HEREAFTER.

THIS remark of our Lord to Peter is also the continual language of God in the events of his providence. He will have us to live by faith, not by sight. Human life, considered as a complete and ultimate scheme, presents us at every step with problems which we know not how to solve, and darkness settles on our path which no human eye can pierce. Questions are continually arising which baffle our best skill, and after taxing our minds to the utmost, only serve to give us new lessons of the depth and boundlessness of human ignorance. We know not, for example, why physical evil, or suffering, should be so differently dispensed among creatures who are equally the children of God; or why moral evil, or sin, under an infinitely wise and good and powerful government should be permitted to exist at all. Our best concerted plans often disappoint our hopes. "The race is obviously not always to the swift, nor the battle to the strong." Trifling circumstances, which no human sagacity can fore-

see, are continually deciding the most momentous concerns, in the most unexpected manner. Industry in business not unfrequently labors for naught; activity in enterprise is often unavailing; fruitfulness of resource only leads to varied disappointment; perseverance goes on from failure to failure; while wealth mean time is showered into the lap of the careless, the thriftless and the idle. Health is almost wholly denied to some; it is scarcely ever withholden from others. Debility and pain are the portion of one class of individuals all life long, and the best they can hope, with all their solicitude and caution, is but a change from greater suffering to a less; while another class amidst exposure and privation, and even in the indulgence of passions and appetites which usually drain dry the springs of life, yet live on in strength and ease. Human estimation is often, to our view, strangely dispensed. It seems sometimes to be the result of what men call the accidents of birth or rank or place, or of peculiar circumstances. It is thrust, as it were, upon some without either effort or desert on their part, while it eludes the painful toil, the watchful eye, the eager grasp of others. Sorrows, indeed, come to most; but in how varied a character, and in how different a degree. They are wholly irrespective of moral worth; and often visit, in their most dreadful aspect, those whom, if any, we should hope and believe would enjoy an immunity from their approach. And death — death, the final change — death, the great remediless change, though it comes to all alike,— there is no even apparently partial allotment in this,— yet comes under circumstances which teach us the utter insecurity of human reliances, the utter fallacy of human hopes. We

see the child cut off in the bud and blossom of its being, while infirm old age is carried on further and further into the barren winter of life. The strong are stricken in the meridian of their strength, while the weak and the diseased are spared. The worthy are taken, the worthless are left. The closest ties that bind together human hearts are ruthlessly broken, while those which are loosely or irksomely worn outlast the saddest vicissitudes. And the angel of Death, passing over the abodes of wretchedness, where he would be welcomed as a friend, we often see falling upon the peaceful and happy family circle, and in the hour of its fancied security, and at a blow, making it forlorn and desolate.

Such is plainly the course of God's providence. It is in vain that we attempt to conceal it. We may discern indeed some general laws of goodness and care, which are plain enough for our guidance in the ordinary affairs of life, and are stable enough for our confidence in virtuous effort; but still results are known only to God. Our duty is made plain, but the issues of human conduct in this world are veiled in doubt and darkness. This at first view may seem a melancholy and disheartening aspect of the Divine government. We may be ready to consider it as a great unhappiness, that so much uncertainty should rest upon human life, that there is no more security in human expectations, that God's ways are so mysterious to us. But upon reflection we shall find, I think, that even all these circumstances are ordered in infinite wisdom and love, and that they are the direct, and, so far as we know, the only means of securing our highest welfare for the longest time. This I now propose to illustrate.

I begin with the obvious remark, that nothing is very important to us, as immortal and accountable beings, but *our moral and religious characters.* Our spiritual state, —the condition of that deathless being which we call ourselves, as it appears to the Omniscient Eye — is the great concern. It matters little whether our life on earth extend to many years, or to few; since not only the longest period is but a point compared with the whole duration of the human soul, but the shortest period is long enough, if well employed, to enable us to win an immortal crown. It matters little what the incidents of life are, provided they be consecrated to God and duty. It matters little whether joy or sorrow be our lot, provided they both be used for the improvement of the heart, temper and life. Success we so earnestly seek, health we so much covet, an outward happiness we so devoutly pursue, external possessions which so engross our thoughts; — what are they worth compared with that moral preparation of the spirit within, on which depends our well-being in time and in eternity. Nothing certainly, compared with this, is worth a single thought. The great question is, not what we enjoy, not what we possess, not what we suffer, not even what we do; but what we *are.* That condition of life is best for you and for me, which has a tendency to make us the best men, and the best Christians,— be it what it may.

I now observe, that this uncertainty which hangs over the future, this ignorance of the designs of Providence in respect to our condition in this life, affords an admirable, and so far as we know, an indispensable, moral and religious discipline of the soul. This is now to be briefly illustrated.

And in the first place, this uncertainty and ignorance must naturally dispose all reflecting minds to *a habit of constant watchfulness;* — watchfulness, I mean, in regard to the issues of human conduct. "What I say unto you," these are the words of the Saviour of men, "I say unto all, Watch." And why? "Because ye know not when your Lord cometh." You know not what the future has in reserve. You may be tried by adversity, by sickness, or by the approach of death, and you know not when. Is it not wise then to be prepared for their approach? Is it not wise to be habitually prepared for what may at any time befal us? Suppose that the hour were marked out in the calendar of our lives, when we must encounter these sad trials. Suppose, for instance, that the day of our death was distinctly made known to us. If it were near, it would naturally overwhelm us with anxiety and alarm. If it were distant, we should be liable to put off all serious thoughts of it until its nearer approach, and pass the interval in more than ordinary forgetfulness of God and of preparation for heaven. In both cases our moral improvement would suffer. As it is, living as we do in a world where nothing is constant but change, how easily do we forget the solemn responsibleness under which we are acting. And can we desire then to remove those moral restraints which are now imposed upon us by the uncertainty of our present condition? If we do, we desire to remove one of the greatest of those inducements to moral and religious improvement which now influence the minds of men.

Another important effect of the uncertainty which marks the doings of Providence, is to teach us to *feel habitually our dependence upon God.* This is a lesson

which, notwithstanding the constant instructions which are now given us from on high, of the insecurity of earthly happiness, is rarely ever well learned. Suppose then that these were withholden, that there were no disappointments of human expectations. Suppose success always, and by a known rule, followed effort; — would there not be great danger that we should become self-confident and presumptuous? Success, even in the uncertain manner it is now dispensed, is a harder trial of most men's characters than failure. Few indeed are able to bear it. The observation of every day confirms the truth of this remark. If then it were rendered certain, would it not lead men, like the impious king of old, in an over-estimate of their own sufficiency, to lift themselves up against the Lord of heaven? How great then is the mercy of disappointments! They come like the mysterious handwriting on the wall, to startle us from a delusive security, and lead us to place our whole dependence on God alone.

But thirdly, it is not merely a sense of necessary dependence upon God, a dependence which is forced upon us by the insecurity which attends all things else, that is inculcated by the darkness of God's providence; but it leads us to *place an implicit and childlike confidence in our Heavenly Father.* This virtue, like all the other real and effective virtues, can only be acquired and perfected by trial, and it can only be tried by the adverse circumstances of our lot in life. When all is bright and happy in our condition, when all within is peaceful and all without is prosperous, it is no difficult thing, except perhaps with the stupid, the over-busy, the vile, or the frivolous, to look up to God in filial confidence and trust. But this virtue,— I say it again,— to be a virtue worth the name,

must be tried, and it can only be tried by unforeseen and gloomy vicissitude. It may spring up in the sunshine, but it must be strengthened and matured and rooted by the storm. You do, you may sincerely think, trust in God; you do, you may really believe, look to Him in filial confidence. But will it abide a searching test? Do you, I ask, feel this filial trust strong at your heart amidst disappointment, poverty, blighted hopes, ingratitude, envyings, hatred and calumnies? Does it render you serene, patient, and hopeful amidst persecution, infirmity, pain, distress? Do you find it near you when you watch in the chamber of a sick friend? Do you find it sustain you when you bend over his bed of death, and close forever those eyes which never looked but in love and tenderness unutterable upon you? If so, then holy peace of heart is indeed secured; but if you will trace its origin, you will find it in the history of the past. You will perceive that it was not the product of the hour, nor the growth of your happy and prosperous days, but that it was first suggested to the soul in the darker seasons of adversity, and that by the same sad ministry it was afterwards strengthened and perfected. In a review like this you will need none to teach you, how gracious God is even in the severest of his allotments. You will need no arguments to prove that his fatherly love is most fully manifested in the darkness of his providence, since you have thus been most impressively taught,

> "The path of sorrow, and that path alone,
> Leads to the place where sorrow is unknown"

The last instruction to which I shall refer as enforced by the mysterious providence of God is *entire resignation*

to His will. This is the consummation of faith and hope. It is not a blind submission to power which cannot be controlled, nor a slavish acquiescence in events where resistance would only increase the evils felt or feared ; but it is an enlightened, a cheerful, an unreserved surrender of ourselves to God. Its only fitting language is that of inspiration. — " Whom have I in heaven but Thee, and there is none on earth I desire in comparison with Thee. My flesh and my heart faileth : but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion forever." Now a virtue like this can only spring from a full and deep sense of our weakness, our ignorance, and our helplessness ; and these are lessons which are only thoroughly taught and learned by the sad and unlooked-for changes of God's providence. We are thus made to feel our own inability to help ourselves, that we may cast all our cares upon God, in the blessed assurance that He cares for us. We are thus made to know that we know nothing, that we may commit our ways to Him who knoweth all things. We are placed in a state of change, that we may look in hope and trust to Him who changes not. We are called to suffering, that we may raise our thoughts to that world where nothing that disturbeth can ever enter. We are called to mourn, that we may enter in faith into that state where all tears shall be wiped from all eyes. We are called to part with loved and cherished friends, that we may be led to seek that heavenly Friend who will never fail. We are called to see that earth is a pilgrimage — often a pilgrimage of toil and tears, that we may prepare ourselves for a home, — a home indeed, — a home of heavenly rest and everlasting joy.

Such is a brief sketch of some of the reasons and uses

of that darkness in which the hand of Providence is veiled. Do we not see, even in this, the gracious provisions of ineffable love? Those very circumstances, of which in our folly and short-sightedness we are willing to complain, are precisely those by which our highest and only permanent happiness is best promoted and secured. God loves us all better than we love ourselves, and therefore consults for that higher welfare, which we in our ignorance and devotion to present objects should otherwise forego. He knows that our spiritual improvement is a greater good than any present success; that spiritual deadness or depravity is a greater evil than any present sorrow; and will not allow us, therefore, to pursue our own wayward paths, uninstructed, unwarned by his gracious admonitions. What parts of life, think you, shall we look back upon with the most pleasure, when life is drawing to a close and we are about to enter into the unseen world? Are they the hours of exultation, success in worldly business, those which have been passed in idleness, in frivolity, in unworthy self-indulgence, or in ostentatious display? Or are they those, in which we have deeply felt our exposure to vicissitude; our solemn accountability to our future Judge; in which pride has been brought low, and the heart wrung with disappointment? Many, I trust, who receive these words have found in a retrospect of their past lives, that what at the time were considered evils, have proved on trial to have been indeed blessings in a sadder form. In this view the administrations of Divine Providence are no longer dark and gloomy, the clouds disperse, the prospect brightens, and the path of life is radiant with heavenly light. It is no longer a subject of deepest anxiety what the events of life may be,

but how we improve by the allotments of Providence, assured that no good effort on our part is lost, and that all things shall work together for our good, if we love and serve our God and meekly follow and earnestly improve the leadings of his guidance.

But if, notwithstanding these explanations, difficulties on this subject yet remain, there is a solution in reserve which will explain them all. "What I do," saith our Lord to Peter, "thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter." Yes, the hour is coming, when all the dispensations of God and all his gracious designs in regard to us shall be fully made known,— when what we once thought severe, he will show us to have been kind, — when what we once thought was the blight of our happiness, shall be seen to have been indeed the germ of ever-blooming, undecaying joy,— when what once seemed to us in this the twilight of our existence insuperable obstacles to our well-being, shall vanish in the light of an everlasting day. Let then our murmurs be stilled. They are resolvable into our ignorance of the ways of God — an ignorance too, appointed in mercy. Let us feel, that it is not for such as we to embrace in all its extent the scheme of God's providence, and that the ability of doing this with our present faculties would involve a deplorable narrowness and imperfection in the scheme itself. Let us be grateful then, that enough is made known to us of some of its parts, to authorize us in believing that the whole is ordered in unspeakable wisdom and in parental love. Despair not then, any whom He hath visited with affliction! God's ways are graciously ordered even to you. You can suffer nothing but what is intended, in his adorable goodness, for your benefit,— nothing but

what, could the whole range of your future being be seen by you as it is by Him, you would appoint for yourselves.

Yes, all just thought on this great theme depends on the point of vision in which we place ourselves. If we limit our views to the narrow confines which are between ourselves and our graves, and look upon life, so to speak, upon a level with it, and restrict our prospect to the near horizon that shuts down upon this little span of our earthly existence, it exhibits to us a scene of imperfection, irregularity, confusion and disorder. It suggests to the mind a problem, for which, I am free to confess, I have no solution. Human condition and human destiny then seem not only an inexplicable, but a melancholy and disheartening enigma. But if we view the things of time from a higher elevation than earth and time can afford; if we regard them, as we may suppose they are regarded by superior intelligences; if we view them, in any humble measure, as we may suppose they are viewed by God, as a part of his universal kingdom, which comprehends all time, all space, all creatures, all events, and all eternity;—then seeming difficulties vanish away; even the dark valley of death is cheered by rays of glory beaming from the eternal city, and the gloomiest passages of this earthly pilgrimage are seen to be but parts of one grand, beautiful, admirably adjusted and perfect whole.

And in conclusion, let all learn to take just views of life, and of the great object of life. Let all learn to regard the events of Providence not merely in their present character and effects, but in reference to those purposes which they were intended, by a wisdom higher than ours, to fulfil. Let us remember, that in the longest reach of life on earth we can take but an infant's step towards our

opening destinies. If the hand of God then seem to be veiled in darkness, if his dispensations be surrounded with mystery, let them teach us circumspection, watchfulness, dependence upon God, filial trust in him, and perfect resignation to his will. Nothing, I repeat it,— and let this remark at parting with the subject rest upon all our minds — nothing is of much importance to us but our moral and religious characters. And if doubt still remain upon our spirits in regard to any of the dealings of God's providence, let us confidently refer ourselves to that better and brighter scene, where what baffles our inquiries now shall be fully explained, and where what we know *not* now shall be fully known.

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SYMPATHY IN CONGREGATIONS.

By REV. FREDERICK A. FARLEY.

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SYMPATHY IN CONGREGATIONS.

What is the great end for which we are gathered together into distinct religious societies? Why do men thus become associated? For what special purpose does any collection of believers go on the Sabbath to one place of worship, rather than to another? Is it merely a love of order — a consciousness that public worship, to be rightly conducted in any community, must be by means of some such organization? Is it merely, that as the community is divided in its estimation or perception of divine truth, each portion of it chooses to go where it may have those views unfolded which are most agreeable to its own? That there must be, if public worship be maintained at all, distinct assemblies of worshippers, seems almost a self-evident proposition; and almost equally so, that they must each be composed of such persons as on the whole do best agree in their speculative opinions in religion and morals. Do we then fully answer the questions with which I begun, by saying that the great end for which distinct religious societies are gathered, and human beings become thus associated, is the better

ordering of public worship? No doubt this is in part the answer; but is it, or ought it to be, the whole answer? Is it enough, in other words, is it enough, that on each return of the holy day we enter our churches each family by itself, each shutting itself within the four sides of its pew, to listen, as though we felt no interest in each other, to the instructions which may there be dispensed, and to unite not with one another, but with the minister, in the prayers which he may offer? Does not the theory of this arrangement of things look farther? Does not the very fact that we are *associated* — that we compose *a society* — imply more? In proportion as the objects of *any* association of human beings are seen by its members to be of great moment, do they not actually feel drawn more and more together, for the accomplishment of these objects? Does not this seem to be the natural dictate of the human heart?

But what, too often, is the fact? How many in every congregation *never meet*, except within the consecrated walls of the church, or on some other occasion which brings the whole or a portion of the society together for some special religious act. And even then, how is it with great numbers? They enter together, at least they retire together, shoulder to shoulder in the aisles or the porch of the church, month after month, year after year; and not a look — not a word — not even a nod — not one solitary sign of recognition, bears its slight testimony to their being united together for any thing! Nought, but the mere fact, that there, in silence, in insulated positions, they from time to time assemble. Now, is this as it ought to be? Are there not some reasons for thinking, that something more than this should mark their meeting together as a company of believers?

The general objects for which we are gathered into distinct religious societies, are of transcendent importance. They cannot be exaggerated, or overstated. As truly as we have souls, immortal souls to be saved, — as truly as God exists, — as truly as beyond the grave a righteous retribution awaits all, so truly are our religious societies organized and gathered for purposes infinitely beyond all other human associations in solemnity and interest. Is it the public worship of God, which they propose? They go then, — dust and ashes, so helpless, so frail, so perishing are they if left to themselves, to adore the Infinite, the Immutable, the Eternal One! Tried — tempted — fallen; burdened with sin — pressed down with sorrow — ignorant and erring, — they seek the presence of him who alone is able to save, who alone knows the heart, who alone can forgive, who alone can effectually console, who alone can wholly illumine or safely guide. And there, in that august and glorious Presence, all equal; in regard to every outward concern or consideration, all equal! Station — fortune — beauty — power — however exalted, or the contrary, in all these and a thousand other things in the sight of man, that Eye looks beneath all to the heart, and the worship is acceptable only as it is sincere. Is it religious instruction for which they associate and meet there? It is instruction upon themes which relate to no mere temporary or passing interests; but to the welfare of the undying soul, and which, therefore, are of equal moment to each and all. Is it for religious communion that they thus gather together? It is communion upon themes which derive no importance from anything in the outward condition of the individuals, but have an equal

bearing upon all, be their condition in this world what it may.

Amid all the indifference of mankind, nothing strikes me with more amazement than the indifference, or, perhaps more properly, the want of any adequate sensibility on the part of multitudes who assemble on the Sabbath, from week to week, to the grand objects and themes which are presented to their consideration in the house of God. Here are some hundreds of human beings, whose hold on life is so uncertain that they cannot safely calculate upon a day — who are placed in this world to undergo a period longer or shorter of probation, preparatory to a more advanced state of existence, who may, suddenly, in the midst of apparent health, and in the very hey-day of life, be summoned to the bar of God, — and who yet, for years, come together with much the same sort of feelings as to all purposes of improvement, as they would carry to any other place of public resort; and can find it in their hearts to comment upon what is seen, and said, and done here, in much the same temper and spirit as might befit any mere worldly occasion; forgetful that each time may be the *last* — each hymn of praise — each sermon — each solemn prayer — the last for them! When I reflect upon this state of things, and the terrible mockery of the most sacred and solemn concerns of man which it involves, methinks it were well could a voice from the desert, stern and appalling like that of the Baptist calling men to "Repent" — or even the trump of the archangel which might wake the dead, be heard in our solemn assemblies! The very consternation — the wailing and wo which would then ensue — anything would be better than this moral apathy and death!

Let it not be thought that I have wandered from my main theme. The Saviour made the remarkable declaration, "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." And the Apostle John exhorted those to whom he wrote his first epistle, "Beloved, let us love one another." I began by inquiring of the objects for which we associate together, ostensibly at least, in religious societies? I then hinted at the slight degree which seemed to unite those who are thus ostensibly, outwardly, bound together. And then I intended, from the transcendent importance to each and all of public worship, religious instruction, and communion, to raise the inference, obvious enough it seems to me, that a far stronger sympathy should exist among those thus associated — that beings thus coming together under circumstances which in theory, at least, distinctly recognise their essential equality in the sight of God, and their equal interest in the eternal welfare of the soul, should feel and manifest a deeper interest in one another, should cherish more love for one another, and should in all things, as far as possible, prove the value which they put upon the great truths which they hold or profess to hold in common, by their earnest and strong readiness to know and be known to each other, as united together for some of the grandest objects and purposes of life. And nothing better accounts for the want of such mutual sympathy and love, than the essential and almost utter indifference which pervades such large portions of our congregations to the great duties and themes of the church; — contenting themselves too often with an outward attendance in this insulated manner as regards their fellow-worshippers; — permitting all the petty circumstances which break up

and separate worldly society into parcels and castes, to enter the house of God, and to shut out thence that due consideration of the momentous subjects there brought before the mind, which, properly bestowed, would make them more deeply interested in each other, and more ready to smpathize and to love.

But some may be prompt to ask, "What would you have? Must we, because we belong to the same religious society, and worship at the same church, be all intimately associated as friends and companions? This were impossible." If this *be* impossible, it does not follow that the very opposite extreme of all this must be the right course; and I cannot but think it the entirely wrong course. This, then, is what I mean — and thus much certainly is demanded, not only by particular texts of Scripture, such as I have quoted, but by the whole scope and spirit of the religion which thus associates us. That we should at least know and recognise each other, whenever and wherever we meet as fellow-worshippers and fellow-disciples; that we should not enter and leave the house of prayer, treating each other in its aisles and porch as strangers — contradicting thus the whole language, forms, and spirit of the worship in which we there engage. As to thus much, I should hope there could be little doubt in the minds of any.

And quite beyond this I can have as little doubt, that as fellow-Christians of the same society, we ought to be prepared to go. One would think, that uniting as we do, Sabbath after Sabbath, in our prayers and praises beneath the same roof; called as we all are and must be in the flight of time, to pass through similar trials and afflictions, and to resort to the same altar for strength and consola-

tion; — listening as we do to the same teachings from the same lips, which are made by our own choice the oracles of God's truth to us; — and each in turn making proof of the value and power of religion itself under kindred influences,— that something like love would spring up among us and bind us together; and that an affection and sympathy stronger than among the ordinary associations of life and the world, in proportion as the causes and grounds of union are more weighty and momentous, might grow and be cherished as year after year rolls away.

There is, however, an additional reason resulting from the very nature of the case, for cultivating this affectionate sympathy among the members of the same Christian congregation, and that is, that they ought to be doing some good to one another, helping each other on in the great work of life. Will it not seem strange hereafter, in the great day of account, when, if not before, the utter emptiness of all those circumstances which are here permitted to keep us so much and so far apart, will be fully perceived,— will it not seem strange, that, when for a considerable number of years we were ostensibly gathered into the same fold of the Great Shepherd, we yet, so far from aiding one another to compass the great ends for which life was given, remained almost utter strangers to each other; — though coming up on the Lord's day to the same altar, and joining in the same worship, we had in the great majority of cases so few feelings in common, that we scarcely knew each other more than even by name? There is room for much reflection, and in many instances for much self-reproach, upon the manner and degree in which the whole subject of religion, our reli-

gious relations, and our religious experience, is shut out from our social intercourse, even where everything might seem to favor the utmost ease and freedom. We can meet and talk together with apparent ease and interest upon almost every other subject; but the moment this is introduced, how suddenly the air, the expression of countenance, the very tones of voice, are all changed! What an appearance of constraint and reserve there is at once! And how gladly is the moment of relief welcomed! All this is wrong. Were this subject viewed aright, nothing would be found a more delightful theme — for of all others it has the most intimate and endearing connexions with the truest and most endearing happiness of all, and opens the way for the most hallowed influences of friendship to exert themselves and be felt. But if this be so only under the most promising circumstances, how little can be expected, when as is now so much the case, the great body of our congregations are almost unknown to each other.

I might enlarge, besides, upon the impulse which would be given not to the growth only, but the stability of a congregation, and in aid of institutions connected with the great cause of religion and benevolence, by the existence of this affectionate sympathy among its members. Nothing can be plainer than such a result. But instead of doing so, I would, before leaving the subject, say a word of caution against any misapprehension. While I exceedingly desire, that such a sympathy should exist in every Christian congregation as that which I have urged, I would not have it supposed that I would have it stop and be confined there, so that we should be shut up within ourselves, and made proportionably cold toward others.

Happily there is no great danger of such a consequence with such a faith as we profess: should it follow, it would only prove us recreant to that faith, which inculcates the most enlarged and generous good-will to all. What I would be understood to urge is this — that we should feel and manifest as members of the same congregation, a kind and affectionate interest in one another. If, as I pray that we all may, we shall be admitted hereafter into the great company of the redeemed, I would that we may have nothing with which to reproach ourselves there for our treatment of each other, for our neglect of each other here, as fellow-worshippers in God's House. If any be disposed to deem me visionary upon this subject, I beseech them to reflect. I look at my congregation there gathered — and all earthly, all mere human distinctions fade away. What do I behold, but a band of immortal beings — equally the objects of God's all-embracing love — equally comprehended in the grand scheme of Christ's precious redemption — equally capable of attaining the great boon of eternal bliss. I carry my view onward to the hour, when they will all be gathered to the judgment to come! And how earnestly do I wish, that for their own sakes, for the sake of some of the most delightful recollections which may then thrill their souls, they may be able to greet each other there as those who had here interchanged thought and affection and sympathy, in regard to the loftiest concerns of man, the sublimest truths of God! That having worshipped together on earth at the same altar, it was not as strangers but as brethren; and now that earth has passed away, they feel themselves only re-united, a familiar company, in the mansions of the Father's house! How does the thought elevate and ennoble, — with what sublimity does it invest,

our Sabbath gatherings and worship! How does it rebuke the cold distance which in too many cases separates the frequenters of the same temple! How much more fervent and sincere would our worship be, were our hearts more closely knit together in that sympathy and love, which belong to, and should mark the, disciples of Christ!

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THE

UNITARIAN'S APPEAL.

THREE SERMONS,

ILLUSTRATIVE OF THE CLAIM OF UNITARIANS TO THE CHARACTER OF

EVANGELICAL CHRISTIANS,

INDEPENDENT OF THE TRUTH OF THEIR PECULIAR OPINIONS.

PREACHED IN THE

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BY S. G. BULFINCH.

Pastor of that Church.

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SERMON I.

ACTS, VIII. 37.

I BELIEVE THAT JESUS CHRIST IS THE SON OF GOD.

THERE exists among the various denominations of Christians in our country, a tendency to liberality of feeling, which is more and more becoming developed. The idea that all goodness is confined within the limits of a single sect, that God looks with approbation upon only one small class of his worshippers, while the immense majority are objects of his wrath, is too absurd for the common sense and the charity of the nineteenth century. Many causes have contributed and are still contributing, to break down those walls which hitherto have separated Christians of different names. The followers of the Saviour, though of various sects, have become aware that they are engaged in waging the same warfare against the evil that is in the world. Side by side they have engaged in every enterprise of philanthropy at home; and their missionaries have met in the opposite regions of the globe, and finding themselves surrounded by heathen darkness, upon which they were to shed the light of truth,

they have met, not as controversialists, but as brethren. Without relinquishing their respective doctrinal peculiarities, without ceasing, when occasion offered, to defend those peculiarities, most of the leading denominations have consented to recognise each other as entitled to the name and character of Evangelical Christians, extending to each other, under that name, full sympathy and cordial coöperation.

It is the object of my present undertaking, to prove the claim of Unitarians to admission as members of this glorious league. To some extent indeed, nothing can prevent us from belonging to it; for nothing can prevent us from feeling and exhibiting towards our fellow-Christians the spirit of brotherhood; and if we conduct ourselves aright, no speculative views can, in this age, prevent us from receiving, individually their respect and affection. Nor is the present attempt suggested by any recent experience of a spirit existing among our fellow-Christians, adverse to that harmony and charity which we desire to see prevailing. On the contrary, we acknowledge with pleasure the exhibition in many instances in this community, of a more liberal spirit towards our denomination, than that which has appeared to exist in some other parts of our country. We feel encouraged by this justice on the part of our brethren, to do what we can for the promotion still further, of harmony among those who honor the same blessed Saviour.

The present attempt, it will therefore be perceived, is not controversial in its character. Our object is to prove, not in this instance the truth of our own peculiar opinions, though of their truth and importance we are firmly persuaded, but that whether those peculiar opinions be cor-

rect or not, there remains to us and to our fellow-Christians, sufficient common ground to allow us to recognise each other as sharers in the same title, that of Evangelical Christians. Nor do we, in taking this position, undervalue the importance of those points in which we differ. We may illustrate our own claims best by comparing them with the views taken of Christian fellowship by different societies, which recognise each other as Evangelical. The Episcopalian contends,—at least such is the ground taken by many eminent men of that denomination, that an individual cannot properly be admitted to the ministry, except by a bishop, who has himself received ordination from other bishops, the line of succession being uninterrupted back to the times of the Apostles. The Baptist, on the other hand, considering immersion as required by the Saviour, and that this can only properly be received by those who are old enough to comprehend its meaning, regards of necessity, those who have been consecrated by sprinkling, or in infancy, as not properly baptized. Thus the Episcopalian, if standing on the ancient ground of his church, regards the Baptist as not ordained,—the Baptist regards the Episcopalian as not baptized. Yet with this wide difference between them, so wide that it would seem as if all the ordinances of religion in each of these sects must be looked upon by their brethren as utterly invalid, yet do they recognise each other as Evangelical Christians, fellow-servants of God, fellow-disciples of the Saviour. My allusion to these highly respectable denominations is in no spirit of unfriendliness. It has been made, only to illustrate the position which, in this discourse, I claim for our own denomination; and I trust that every liberal

minded Christian of every sect, would rejoice to find, that on whatever points of doctrine he may still feel compelled to differ from us, he is authorized to extend to us the right hand of fellowship, of brotherhood in feeling, and of warm coöperation in the great cause of God and man.

But why, it may be asked, should attempts of this kind be made? Why seek to bring into nearer union denominations which are so widely different? I have no wish to deny, that one great reason is, our hope, that as unfounded prejudices against us are removed, a more ready access may be found for those truths, which, as we conceive, we peculiarly hold, to extend themselves among our fellow-Christians. And who is there, however much opposed to our opinions, that would confess a desire to resist their progress by the weapons of misrepresentation and uncharitableness? This motive however, is not the only one by which we are influenced. We see the exertions of our brethren of every name in the common cause. We witness their zeal in the missionary enterprise; we see them active in every good work in our own country; and in proportion as, from these causes, we respect and love them, in that proportion do we feel more deeply our own insulated position. We perceive, too, the incalculable injury done to the cause of Christ by the divisions which exist among his followers; the ground given for the attacks of infidelity, and for the still more dangerous progress of indifference. We know that uniformity of religious opinions is not to be attained, at least in our day; but we hail the signs of a better union, a union of religious feeling, and religious effort. In the great battle to be waged against wickedness under the standard of the Redeemer, we claim our station, not as an insulated and

almost neutral detachment, but with the main body of our brethren, shoulder to shoulder, hand with hand, and heart with heart.

The word *Evangelical* means *Gospel.* It is needless for our present purpose to go farther into its signification. Evangelical Christians then, are Gospel Christians; Christians who reverence the Gospel; Christians in the Gospel sense of the word. We proceed to state the grounds on which we claim to be thus considered.

First, then, we claim to be evangelical Christians, because we acknowledge that creed which alone our Saviour and his early disciples required. What that creed was, we may learn from the circumstances attending the baptism of the Ethiopean nobleman, as recorded in the eighth chapter of Acts. When, having been instructed by the evangelist Philip, the Ethiopean desired to receive the ordinance of baptism,—he was told, "If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." This simple confession of faith was regarded as sufficient, and the inspired teacher administered to him the initiatory rite of the Christian church. If this creed was sufficient in the days of Philip, why is it not in ours?

John, the beloved disciple, in the fourth chapter of his first epistle, gives to his brethren directions by which to distinguish between the spirit of truth and the spirit of error. From his language we select the following expressions; "Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, is of God." "Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God." At the beginning of the next chapter are the words, "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God."

When our Saviour addressed to his disciples the question, "Whom say ye that I am?" Peter answered, "Thou art the Christ, the son of the living God." Was this declaration of belief considered insufficient by the Saviour? Not such is the conclusion we draw from his reply. "Blessed art thou," he exclaimed, "Simon Barjona, for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father who is in heaven."

Brethren of other denominations, our faith is the same which has thus received the sanction of evangelists and apostles, and even of our Lord himself. Does not their example authorize you to receive us to Christian fellowship? To quote but one passage more, "This," said our Saviour, "is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent." We adduce this passage not at present, in its controversial bearing,—though as a declaration of the supremacy of the Father, it appears to us too plain to be easily misconstrued; but surely, if it be, according to the Saviour's own definition, life eternal to know the Father as the only true God, and Jesus Christ as having been sent by him, Unitarians cannot be far from the kingdom of heaven.

Passing along the stream of time, from the days of our Lord and his Apostles, we find a confession of faith, simple as our own, considered as sufficient by believers in general, during the first three centuries. I refer to that venerable formula, the Apostles' creed, a work of unknown authorship, but so ancient, that Ruffinus, a writer of the fourth century, supposed it to have been the production of the Apostles themselves. It is expressed in the following words.

"I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth; And in Jesus Christ, his only Son our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; He went into the place of departed spirits; the third day he rose from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God, the Father Almighty; from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead. I believe in the Holy Ghost; the Holy Catholic (or Universal) Church; the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen."

This ancient Creed expresses the sentiments of Unitarians generally in the United States. A few indeed may question the doctrine of our Lord's miraculous birth, or that of the resurrection of the body; and most of us probably conceive that our Saviour's coming to judge the quick and the dead, is rather to be figuratively than literally understood. But the creed in its essential portions describes our faith. It links us to the primitive evangelical church, in which it was considered sufficient. Can our brethren, some of whom still profess their faith, sabbath after sabbath, in the same form of words, deny to us the name and character of evangelical Christians?

We claim that character, secondly, because we hold, in common with our brethren, to the great distinguishing doctrines of the Gospel. It is not necessary here that we should prove our entire agreement with any denomination of our fellow-believers. Differences, and important differences there are, between our brethren and ourselves; but we cannot regard these differences as sufficient to exclude either party from the character of gospel Christ-

ians, while we worship the same God, and reverence the same Saviour; while our trust for the future is in the same promises of mercy, while we depend on the same conditions, and look forward to the same righteous retribution, and the same glorious immortality.

We worship the same God. The object of our reverence is that great Universal Father, who reveals himself in the works of nature, who declared through Moses, "Hear, O Israel, the Lord your God is one Lord;" he of whom Jesus Christ hath taught us, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind." We worship him, and him alone. Brethren, do you worship any other? I enter your churches. I listen to the prayers which are there offered, and seldom do I hear aught which should indicate a different belief from my own. Seldom indeed does the prayer appear to be addressed to Jesus Christ. Seldom indeed is the impression forced upon the mind that he is considered an object of worship, until his name is introduced in the form of words by which the prayer is concluded. Sometimes indeed, as in some instances in the beautiful service of the Episcopal church, the very manner in which the name of the Saviour is introduced, shows that he had not been thought of previously as the being to whom the prayer was addressed. The words are such as these, "Through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom, with THEE and the Holy Ghost, be all honor and glory, world without end." The word *thee*, in this sentence, marks the person to whom alone the prayer was addressed, and shows that the other two were not included in the act of worship. The devotions then, in every church, are in great part Unitarian. We account for this by believing that the undivided and unrivalled divinity

of the Father is so plainly the doctrine of the Bible, that even those who reject it in theory cannot avoid admitting it in practice. But let it be accounted for as it may, the fact remains, that seldom, very seldom, in a Trinitarian church, is a prayer to the Trinity to be heard, marked as such by anything more than the concluding sentence, while there as with us, the devotions are generally offered to the one God, the Father. There are exceptions. Language is sometimes used in prayer which a conscientious Unitarian had rather perish at the stake than employ; but such instances are indeed exceptions, and excite attention, as variations from the common mode.

Again, my brethren, if you urge it against our claims to Christian fellowship, that we do not worship Christ, we may reply by asking in what sense, in what character do you worship him? Is the object of your adoration the man Christ Jesus, who was born of Mary, who increased in wisdom and stature, who suffered hunger and thirst, was excited to grief, to holy indignation, to tears of pity and of sympathy, who died on the cross,—the only being who ever bore the name of Jesus Christ on earth? No. Ask of your learned divines and they will tell you, that when Christ is said to have increased in wisdom and stature, it was in his human nature; when he was an hungered, it was in his human nature; when he wept he was human; when he died he was human. You shrink from the thought that the immutable God could die. Every action that our Saviour did on earth was done in his human nature. But the object that you worship when you think of the Saviour as an object of worship at all, is the Divine nature of Jesus Christ, that portion of the Divine Being or attributes which was mysteriously united to him. How far then does our worship

differ? We, like you, adore that God, who manifested himself in the man Christ Jesus. You regard the divine and human natures as constituting one being; we regard the Deity as revealing himself fully to the human being, and presenting in the latter, an image of his own moral perfections to the world. Neither of us, I trust, are guilty of worshipping the man. Both of us, I trust, worship the God alone.

But having said thus much, candor requires me to add something, lest I be misunderstood. Not for the sake of conciliating my fellow-Christians, though that is my earnest desire and my present object, not for the sake of that or of aught else, can I call evil good and good evil. When, if ever it be the case, the distinction is lost sight of, and the human instead of the divine nature of Christ is made the object of worship,—when the conception before the eye of devotion ceases to be that of the eternal God, and becomes that of a suffering human being, when the MAN Jesus Christ is actually the object of prayer, then is an error committed, alike unworthy of man, and of that God, whom alone man ought to worship.

Let us view the subject of our difference from our brethren in regard to the doctrine of the Trinity in yet another light, and inquire whether we vary more widely from their belief than they do among themselves. A large number of nominal Trinitarians regard the Supreme Being as one, undivided Mind, but as sustaining three different offices, or manifesting himself in three different relations to mankind. Others, as archbishop Sherlock, and Miss Catharine Beecher, represent the three divine persons as truly and properly distinct beings, united only in character and purpose. The doctrine of the Athanasian creed differs from both of these, and as far as we

can understand it, represents the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, as each a separate and distinct intelligence, while yet all constitute but one intelligence. Again, many writers on the subject, admitting that the word *person* is not properly applied to the distinctions in the divine Being, confess themselves unable to state what those distinctions are, and censure the rashness of those who have undertaken to explain a subject above the reach of human reason. Here then are four distinct theories of the Trinity, each supported by eminent advocates, claiming alike the name of Trinitarian. Surely our system differs less from the first or last of these described, than these do from either of the others. Surely there is little consistency in the advocate of either of these theories, if recognising the supporters of the others as evangelical Christians, he refuses that name to us.

Brethren, in the remarks which have been offered, I have stated some of those grounds on which we claim, whether our peculiar opinions be correct or not, the name and character of evangelical Christians. Others will hereafter be presented, should I be permitted again to address you. It is in a spirit, the remotest possible from that of hostility or denunciation that this appeal is made to your candor and your reason. Let these be our judges. Lay aside whatever prejudices you may have entertained against a sect which is, to use the language of scripture, "everywhere spoken against," while scarcely anywhere are its doctrines really understood. We seek not your favor from any unworthy motive; but alike for your own sakes and for ours, we ask that candid hearing to which, as fellow-citizens, fellow-Christians, and members of a denomination which has been much misrepresented, we feel that we are entitled.

SERMON II.

II. CORINTHIANS, X. 10.

IF ANY MAN TRUST TO HIMSELF THAT HE IS CHRIST'S, LET HIM OF HIMSELF THINK THIS AGAIN, THAT, AS HE IS CHRIST'S, EVEN SO ARE WE CHRIST'S.

IN the words of the text, the great Apostle of the Gentiles pleads his cause against those who opposed him. He retorts not upon them the charges which had been brought against himself, but stating with dignified and modest openness, his own claims, appeals to them to compare these claims with their own, and if they felt that they had sufficient grounds to be regarded as true followers of the Redeemer, to admit that the proofs which Paul had afforded of his Apostleship, entitled him to the same distinction.

It is in the spirit of the Apostle, that we would endeavor to conduct the argument which is in this discourse resumed. We deny not the claims of any to the Christian name, who give proofs of possessing the Christian character; we rejoice to believe that the spirit of the gospel develops itself through the doctrines of any and every sect, — that there is enough of vitally important

truth held by every denomination, to render those who sincerely follow it, wise unto salvation. We appeal to our brethren, if there be doctrines peculiarly dear to them, and in their estimation suited to touch the hearts and purify the lives of those who hold them, to examine whether those doctrines are not in their essential points, held by us as by themselves; aided by charity in their judgment, to recognise in our faith, and as we humbly hope in our practice, the religion of our common master; and while conscience testifies to their own right to the character of evangelical Christians, to think this also, that as they are Christ's, even so are we Christ's.

Resuming the train of thought which was pursued in the preceding discourse, we have next to observe, that as we adore the same God, so too we reverence the same Redeemer, and look with gratitude to the same sufferings, endured by him for our sakes.

We believe that our blessed Saviour gave his life upon the cross for the salvation of man. We do not indeed believe that his death was, in the literal sense of the words, a sacrifice or a ransom. And we may well ask, if any one believes this to be the case? If it be heresy in us to say that the language of scripture in which our Saviour's death is spoken of as a sacrifice, is to be figuratively understood, it is a heresy in which we have the fellowship of the whole Christian world. Was our Saviour slain upon an altar, consecrated to God? Were the Roman soldiery sacrificing priests, or did they or their Jewish instigators intend in his death a literal sacrifice to the Creator? If so, are we to understand that the sacrifice was accepted, and that those hands, red with the blood of the innocent, performed an ap-

proved service in the sight of the All-just and the All-merciful? No. Our brethren believe not so; nor do we charge such revolting conclusions upon them. We draw the conclusions but to show that they as well as ourselves, understand the expression "sacrifice" in a figurative sense. According to them as to us, the death of our Lord was a sacrifice so far as it was the means of reconciling man to his Maker, and procuring our salvation.

We may apply a similar argument to the expression "ransom." If the blood of Christ was in the literal sense of the word a ransom, we might well ask, to whom that ransom was paid? Was it to God, to redeem our souls from the power of their Creator, Father and Friend? We need not pursue inquiries to which but one answer could be given by any intelligent Christian in the present age. In calling the sufferings of our Lord by such a title as this, we employ figurative language, more obviously indeed than where we speak of them as a sacrifice. The death of our Redeemer is a ransom, as it is the means to free us from the dominion of sin, as slaves are released from bondage on the payment of a price.

If the truth of these representations is admitted, we are not alone in regarding such expressions as figurative, nor does our view of them constitute that wide barrier which has been supposed to exist between the faith of our brethren and our own.

We believe that Jesus died to save mankind. We differ indeed from many of our brethren in our conception of the manner in which the death of our Saviour became instrumental in effecting this object. According to our views, it was chiefly by placing the seal of mar-

tyrdom upon the truth of his mission; by developing the moral glories of his character to more distinct view, through contrast with the suffering which surrounded him; by giving the highest possible proof of his own love for mankind, and thereby establishing the strongest possible claim to their love in return; by demonstrating his own and the Almighty's abhorrence of sin, since so great a sacrifice (for we too can use that word) was not thought too great to be made for effecting its overthrow, and finally, by preparing the way for the great event of the Resurrection. But whatever be the mode in which we derive advantage from it, the suffering endured by our blessed Redeemer was the same. Can it then diminish in any degree our gratitude to him that we contemplate it as operating in one way rather than in another? He died, and for us; he died, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God. Do we need to know more, in order to excite all our warmest and purest emotions of love, and reverence, and gratitude towards the holy sufferer?

It may be indeed suggested, that if our Saviour is conceived to have been himself God, his sufferings on the cross acquire a value which they could not otherwise possess. To this it is sufficient to reply, that no intelligent Trinitarian at the present day maintains the doctrine that the Eternal and Immutable God endured the sufferings of crucifixion. It was the human nature alone of Jesus that bore those pangs; and the pain experienced and the love displayed, are therefore not less great, on our theory, than on that of our brethren.

Yes, fellow-Christians, we too claim an interest in the great salvation wrought out by Jesus Christ. We too feel the all-powerful attraction of the cross. The death

of the Redeemer is in our view the point in scriptural history in which its interest centres. In the personal character of the Saviour, and especially in his sufferings, have the preachers and writers of our denomination, as of others, found a favorite theme. Christianity as we recognise its influence, is not a cold, dead system of rules for outward conduct, but that religion of the gospel, that Evangelical Christianity which lives and breathes in the person of Jesus.

As we adore the same God, as we reverence the same Saviour, so do we acknowledge substantially the same conditions of acceptance with God, which are recognised by our brethren. On scarce any subject probably have our opinions been more misunderstood than upon this. Of this fact the following instance may offer an illustration. Some years since, I read in a Trinitarian periodical, a review of the memoirs of an eminent christian, then recently deceased. The following sentiment was quoted, with apparent approbation. "He often," said the biographer, "expressed his surprise at the presumption of Unitarians, who expect to merit eternal happiness by their own good works." Such was the idea entertained of our belief by the distinguished man who was the subject of the memoir, and obviously held also by his biographer, and by the author of the review. But is this indeed a fair representation of our opinions? Do we expect, weak and shortlived creatures as we are, to merit the happiness of eternity by the imperfect service of a few years here on earth? Far from it. We know, that properly speaking, we could merit nothing, even were our lives pure from all sin. We should still but render back to our heavenly Father something of that which he

had given to us. We should have no more claim, in the way of positive right, to anything further from him, than the debtor has to be rewarded by his creditor, for paying what he justly owed. But even this we know that we are far from doing. We fall short of our duty in instances without number. And do we expect by this imperfect service of our short mortal life, to earn as a fair equivalent the everlasting blessedness of heaven? We disclaim the arrogant idea. We cannot even look for such blessings to the mercy of our God; for it is the office of mercy to pardon, not to confer bounty. It is to his infinite goodness that we look, to that goodness from which we derive our being and all that we enjoy, and on the conditions which he has set before us in the gospel. Those conditions are, repentance, humility, and earnest endeavors after obedience;—faith, according to our means of knowledge, not that which finds its only sphere in the technicalities of a creed, but that which works by love, and purifies the heart.

And in our endeavors to comply with the conditions upon which we have been taught with humility to look for acceptance with our God, we, like our brethren, look for his assisting grace. On this subject, as on those already adverted to, we have reason to believe that our views are much misunderstood. It is probably generally thought that Unitarians reject altogether, the doctrine of divine influences,—the belief that the spirit of God holds intercourse with the spirit of man, suggesting good and suppressing evil. It is indeed our opinion, that since the days of miracles, the influences of the spirit of God are not communicated in such a manner as to be distinguished from the workings of our own minds; "we can-

not tell whence it cometh, or whither it goeth." We yield therefore little regard to narrations of remarkable visions and dreams, or even to those accounts of the experience of particular Christians, in which imagination may have aided to give a semi-miraculous appearance to events which were in strict accordance with the known laws of nature. But that the Supreme Being does exercise a controlling providence over his children in the spiritual world no less than in the external, that his spirit holds communion with theirs, and that its blessed influences are often received in answer to fervent prayer, is a doctrine, as far as I am able to judge, generally received and highly prized in our denomination. We recognise indeed, the influence of the spirit of God as exerted indirectly, by those occurrences in life, which through his wise appointment have been ordered in such a manner as to produce in us improving thoughts; but we believe too in a more direct agency of his spirit, exerting itself not contrary to, but in concert with the known laws of mental association. We would speak indeed with reverence upon a subject so mysterious, but the view thus presented appears to us most consistent with the language of scripture, and with the teachings of nature itself.

We believe, in the next place, with our fellow-Christians in general, in a retribution hereafter. On this subject as on every other, I would be far from disguising the real difference which exists between the sentiments of our brethren and our own. Few Unitarians probably, consider future punishment to be strictly speaking, eternal in its duration, in any other sense at least than that the consequences of past sins will be always in some degree perceived, and forever diminish the degree of happiness

enjoyed. More commonly among us the view is taken, that the words eternal and everlasting, as applied in scripture to future punishment, denote, according to the well-known meaning of the corresponding words in the original, a duration not absolutely boundless, but of great though indeterminate extent; and while some conceive that the punishments of another state of being will result in the purification of all, and their final reception to the blessedness of heaven, others, probably a less numerous class, hold that there may be those, finally impenitent, on whom all the chastisements of divine power and love having been exerted in vain, they will at length receive their final sentence of "everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power," and ceasing to exist, will no longer mar by their sins or their sufferings the harmony of their Creator's works. In general however, such opinions are held among us, less as established doctrines than as speculations upon what God has not clearly revealed, speculations allowable, if they pass not the bounds of that reverence which becomes us, and if we strive not to impose them on others as articles of faith. On the great doctrine that there will be a retribution, our faith is distinct and universally held. We believe that they who live in defiance of the law of God, and die in impenitence, will experience in the future life, the awful consequences of transgression. That those consequences, whatever their nature, will be indeed fearful, we conclude alike from the solemn denunciations of scripture, from the character of our Creator as a God of justice no less than of mercy, and from what we perceive even in the present world, of the terrible suffering which results from wrong-doing. In what manner the punish-

ments of that unseen world will be inflicted, we need not know, satisfied that infinite wisdom, justice and mercy will then, as ever, be united in the character of the Almighty Sovereign.

And as we believe in a retribution of punishment to the impenitent, so do we, no less than our brethren, anticipate never-ending blessedness to those who have humbly and earnestly striven to serve God here below. And in those mansions of bliss on high, should the mercy of our Father grant us reception there, we trust to meet a countless multitude of those whose faith differs most widely from our own, yes, even of those who with sincere but mistaken zeal, have been loudest in denouncing doctrines which probably they but partially understood. We believe there is so much of holiness in Christianity, that its healing and saving influence cannot be wholly lost, however it may become blended with human imperfection. Under whatever form it may exist, while it presents to view the same perfect example, the same pure precepts of virtue, the same doctrines of a God at once our Father and our Judge, and of a Saviour our friend, it is sufficient to lead our steps in the path of holiness and happiness here and hereafter. Those who sincerely and humbly seek the truth, may indeed obtain but imperfect views on many subjects; but they cannot fail of attaining all knowledge which is necessary to salvation. But there must be sincerity and humility. We do not so far disregard differences of opinion, as to consider carelessness on doctrinal subjects justifiable, much less that any one is excusable for a hypocritical concealment of his opinions. No. It is one thing to strive after truth to the best of our power, and failing in part, to depend for acceptance,

as we all must depend, on the pardoning grace of God; it is quite another to view with cold indifference the most important subjects which can engage the attention of man, or being convinced in mind of the correctness of one class of opinions, to be withheld from avowing them by the fear of man, the fascination of numbers, or even by the less unworthy motives of long established custom, or an unwillingness to give pain to others. To our brethren of other denominations, who conscientiously differ from us in opinion, we give the full tribute of our respect and Christian sympathy;—to those, who in reality but secretly believe as we do, who are Unitarians without having the courage to avow it, we would use the language, not of denunciation but of affectionate warning. Let them feel that they have no right, if any peculiar light has been granted to them, to hide it from the world;—that they are called on to come forth and take their stand for the truth, by duty alike to the God they worship, and to their brethren who are at fearful odds and under continual trials of feeling, maintaining the great strife to continue the work of the reformation of Christianity. We call on them, by all that is manly and generous in their natures, if they are superior to the lowest of motives, the most unworthy fears, by the delight of a clear conscience and a sincere worship, by the misery of apparent assent to words in which they do not believe, by their duty to us, to their own consciences and to their God, no longer to deceive themselves by the sophistry that would teach them to regard as justifiable a mental assent to the doctrines of one denomination, and outward conformity with another.

Brethren, of whatever sentiments, let us unite in this; to seek truth, in singleness of heart, and humility of spirit,

fearless of consequences which may result from human opposition, and in the spirit of perfect charity towards each other. If we search to the best of our abilities, and with prayer for divine aid, we may with humble faith, leave the result to God; trusting that he will accept the offering of our sincere effort, and graciously forgive our deficiencies, of his infinite mercy, revealed through Jesus Christ our Lord.

SERMON III.

1. CORINTHIANS, XV. 55.

O DEATH, WHERE IS THY STING? O GRAVE, WHERE IS THY VICTORY?

In resuming at this time the argument which has been carried on in two previous discourses, I have selected these words of the Apostle Paul, as connected with the main branch of my subject which yet remains, the claim of Unitarians to the character of evangelical Christians, as illustrated by the power of their religion to sustain them in the hour of death.

Before, however, we enter upon the discussion of this theme, let us take a brief survey of some others which must not be passed altogether without notice.

We claim, then, to be evangelical or gospel Christians, since we found our faith upon the New Testament, and search out with the best means in our power, the very words the inspired writers employed, and the very sense in which they made use of them. The doctrines which we reject are those which appear to us to be derived by the majority of our fellow-Christians from tradition, not from scripture. No one in reading the bible, would meet with the word Trinity from the beginning to

the end; and it appears to us, that one who had never met with the doctrine before, would equally fail of gaining any idea of it from such a perusal. It is often represented of us, that we are led to the rejection of this and kindred doctrines by deference to human reason alone. In fact, our views of the authority of reason differ little, if at all, from those held by intelligent Protestants of other denominations, nor is the supposed unreasonableness of certain opinions the only or the chief ground for our dissent from them. The chief ground is that we do not find those opinions in the bible. Our opponents may indeed allege respecting us that we read the bible in a prejudiced manner, and that having first formed our opinions, we make scripture bend to them. But those, and we trust there are now but few, who would deliberately venture such an uncharitable accusation, cannot look into our hearts. Why should they assume the power to judge our secret motives, and the course of our private studies? To our own Master we stand or fall, and knowing such charges to be unjust, we trust to be holden up by Him who is able to make us stand.

Similar in character is the prejudice existing in many minds against those studies which scholars in our denomination pursue, as in others, and the occasional reference made in our discourses and writings to the original Greek, and the various readings of ancient manuscripts. A moment's thought will show the groundless nature of such a feeling. The present translation of the scriptures was made in the time of James I. of England, by good men, but neither infallible nor inspired. Does it show want of reverence to the word of God that we should recur, where occasion requires, to the original from which they made

their translation? Does it show disregard of scripture that we should seek for the purest text of that ancient Greek, and avail ourselves of the labors of distinguished scholars, mostly themselves Trinitarians, to discover what were the precise words written by the blessed Apostles, the precise meaning conveyed by the Saviour of mankind? But after all our researches, there are very few passages in which the common version of the scriptures differs so far from what we conceive to be the correct reading, as to present a difficulty of much consequence to the formation of a correct faith; and notwithstanding the existence of these, we receive with reverence, and daily employ the same version of the scriptures that is in constant use among our brethren.

We plead in further support of our claim to the character of evangelical Christians, the important service rendered by the writers of our denomination to the cause of Christianity in the illustration of its evidences. From Lardner, whose works have been the treasury from which later writers have drawn their supplies, to Everett and Channing in our own day, the evidences of Christianity have furnished a favorite theme for the pens of Unitarians. Nor have they neglected the illustration of the scriptures in other modes than that of direct argument in support of their authenticity. If there is a subject on which peculiarly the writers and preachers of our denomination love to dwell, that subject I conceive is the personal character of the Redeemer.

Again, we sustain our claim by appealing to the power of evangelical Christianity, as exhibited in the lives and in the deaths of those who have maintained our sentiments. Unitarianism has not been without its martyrs,

and its not less honored confessors,—those who, from amidst the flames have lifted their hearts and their voices to God in firm faith, and those who have found the light of their Father's love illuminating the gloom of dungeons. Servetus, the learned physician, who anticipated Harvey's great discovery of the circulation of the blood, and who expired in the flames at Geneva; — Joan Bocher, whose death warrant the young king of England signed with tears and almost by compulsion, and who amidst the flames, poured forth the steadfast profession of spiritual freedom in the words, "None but Christ,— none but Christ;" — Biddle, whose determined spirit repeated imprisonment could not subdue, though it destroyed his life; to whom it seemed granted, in the spirit of an ancient prophet, to foresee that which should come to pass, and who resigned himself to death, declaring that his work was done; — such were some among the earlier confessors of Unitarianism. And the same power which our principles possessed in former days, they still retain, to comfort and invigorate the sinking spirit in the hour of death. Yet the remark is often repeated, that Unitarianism is not a religion to die by; and the error, passing from one to another, gains strength, and thousands regard it as unquestionable truth. This evil, though our feelings are sometimes keenly tried by it, is chargeable not to any intention on the part of others to do us wrong, but to vague popular rumor, and to long standing prejudices.

But why should not Unitarian Christianity be all-sufficient to sustain its faithful and practical disciples in the prospect and in the event of death? Is our doctrine so gloomy, does it present such a fearful picture of the eter-

nal world, that the soul which is conscious of having sincerely and humbly striven in the right path, should be overwhelmed with fear? Do we represent God as a Being from whom mercy cannot be expected? Is he not our Father? Yes: as a kind and merciful Father our system delights to present him. He is the God who hath created and sustained us in love; the Being whose beneficence is testified by universal nature, and who so loved us that for us he gave his beloved Son. He is our Father, and though unseen by us, he is not unknown. We have come near to him in prayer; we have opened our hearts before him; we have felt, here below, that we are every moment supported by his goodness; why should we fear then, to go into his more immediate presence? Why should we fear to meet our righteous and merciful Creator, if we have obeyed him according to our power, and presented that offering of our obedience with due humility? And our Saviour; do we fear that he, who is called the Lamb of God, will regard us as his enemies, if we have striven to make ourselves his friends in the way he taught, by doing whatever he commands us? The Unitarian, who lives up to his principles, may feel in the hour of death, that he has honored that Saviour as his blessed Lord wished to be honored. His heart has been touched with his Redeemer's sufferings and love, his mind has delighted to contemplate the perfections of his character, and his life has shown that his meditations on that character were not in vain. Should he fear to meet that Redeemer because his conscience has not permitted him to pay him the homage only due to the Supreme? No. Though his views should prove erroneous, he feels that his sincere, though mistaken conduct, will be more ac-

ceptable than the hypocritical worship, which alone, with his convictions, he could have rendered.

Let it not be thought, however, that Unitarian views can render the unrepentant sinner calm and happy, in any other way than by teaching him to repent. No. To such there remains a fearful looking for of judgment; and that judgment, that punishment of the guilty is in our view more certain, more inevitable, more terrible, therefore, in anticipation, because our view of it is such as may be held in consistency with a belief in the infinite and unceasing mercy of God.

But it is, we presume, the impression among those who consider our religion as unable to give support in the hour of death, that it is thus powerless, because, as the last hour approaches, we lose our faith in it. And wherefore should we? Is a faith, which has been adopted on careful examination of scripture, less likely on that account to stand firm in the hour of trial? If our religion can teach us, as numberless examples prove, to serve God through a long life, under many trials harder to bear than death itself, is it likely to desert us in the last hour? But this question experience can best decide; and that, not the experience of those who have been occasional attendants at our churches, but of those, who, firmly believing our religion to be true, have professed it openly in the sight of man and God, and whose lives have shown that they endeavored to obey its precepts.

To experience then we turn. I select, almost at random, a few cases which happen to be most convenient for reference. First, let me lead you to the dying bed of Joseph Priestley, the venerable and much injured friend of liberty, science and religion, whose works on almost every

branch of knowledge might appear a library in themselves, and the blamelessness of whose conduct drew forth the warm acknowledgments of admiring opponents.

"The day before his death," says the son of Dr. Priestley, "he desired me to read to him the eleventh chapter of John, (the account of the raising of Lazarus from the dead). He dwelt for some time on the advantage he had derived from reading the scriptures daily, and advised me to do the same; saying that it would prove to me, as it had done to him, a source of the purest pleasure." A friend coming into the room, he said, you see Sir, I am still living. His friend observed, he would always live. Yes, said he, I believe I shall, and we shall all meet again in another and a better world. He said this with great animation, laying hold on both his friend's hands in both his."

"At prayer time (the evening before) he wished to have the children (his grandchildren) kneel by his bedside, saying it gave him great pleasure to see the little things kneel; and thinking he possibly might not see them again, he gave them his blessing. At prayers the following night, he had all the children brought to his bed-side as before. After prayers they wished him a good night, and were leaving the room. He desired them to stay, spoke to them each separately. He exhorted them all to continue to love each other. "And you, little thing," speaking to one of them, "remember the hymn you learned, Birds in their little nests agree. I am going to sleep as well as you, for death is only a good, long, sound sleep in the grave, and we shall meet again." He congratulated us on the dispositions of our children; said it was a satisfaction to see them likely to turn out well; and continued for some time to express his confidence in

a happy immortality, and in a future state, which would afford us an ample field for the exercise of our faculties." The next day he dictated to a friend some additions and alterations which he wished to be made in some of his pamphlets. Having seen that his directions were correctly taken down, he said, That is right, I have now done. In about half an hour, he desired to be moved to a different posture. He died in about ten minutes after, but breathed his last so easily that neither his son nor daughter-in-law, who were both sitting close to him, perceived it at the time.

From the parting scene of this great apostle of Unitarianism, look for a moment at the deck of yonder vessel, in which the meek and beloved Abiel Abbot, of Beverly, is returning from an unsuccessful voyage for the restoration of his health. "As he grew gradually fainter, he was asked by one of the passengers, if he felt alarmed. No, he replied, I am in the hands of God, and I trust he will take care of me. He said no more, but raising his eyes to heaven, and breathing the silent language of intense mental devotion, the pure spirit freed itself of the body, the countenance as serene and peaceful as he had that morning been seen asleep in his berth."

Unitarianism has not possessed in this or any country, a more decided, unshrinking and vigorous champion than the late Rev. Bernard Whitman, of Waltham, Massachusetts. He was equally remarkable for his unceasing efforts for the promotion of religion and true virtue among those immediately around him, and for the power of his controversial writings. The following extracts from the memoir of his life will show how far his principles were sufficient to sustain him in the prospect and in the event of death. "Said one who visited him, My

feelings, as I approached the house, were of the most melancholy character. The thought that one so active, one so extensively useful, one of so much promise in regard to future efforts, should thus be cut down in the midst of his years and strength, this thought filled me, as I drew near to the house, with feelings of the deepest melancholy. But the moment I entered the room my feelings changed; the peaceful and happy expression of countenance exhibited by the emaciated sufferer, the cheerfulness of his conversation, not a light and trifling cheerfulness, but a sobered cheerfulness, arising from pure feelings within, from a holy confidence in his heavenly Father, and from a bright view of happy prospects before him, all served to banish feelings of melancholy, and to brighten up the scene with a beam, as it were, from the eternal world."

A fortnight before his death, he used the following language. "My religious sentiments are the same now that they were in health; the same I have always preached and maintained. I feel them able to support and comfort me, and they have never failed to console me. I believe farther, that they are a sufficient support for the Christian, in life and in death." — "Few and simple are the essential articles of my belief; belief in God as my Father and Friend, in his paternal and overruling providence; in Jesus Christ, as the all-sufficient Saviour and Redeemer; in the resurrection of the soul to eternal life; in a future retribution of rewards and punishments, according to the conduct and character of the present life. My faith in the immortality of man is strong and cheering." — "I believe all is right, that God appoints. As for myself, I have not now, nor have I had during my sickness, one moment's anxiety. I submit entirely to

my physician and to the Almighty. Whatever they direct, I shall cheerfully do, and submit to."

Perceiving himself to be dying, he said, "Father, receive my spirit — I die in peace with all." In a short time he added, "My firm faith in Christ supports me now." These were his last words. Mr. Whitman lay for some time perfectly sensible, as was shown by his extending his hand when the physician from time to time approached the bed, until at length with scarcely a struggle he fell asleep.

From the illustrations which press upon me, I select but one more, in the case of an individual of whose feelings at the approach of death I was myself a witness. The late Rev. John B. Pitkin of Richmond, in conversation a few days before his decease, said to me, "I am not depressed. I think the continuance of my life more than doubtful, but this does not depress me. I should like indeed, if it were God's will, to live a few years longer and preach Unitarianism, but I feel prepared for either event." He then spoke of the value of his sentiments to him. "They have supported me," he said, "hitherto, and I have no doubt that my death will be triumphant." One who was near him at the last hour, gives the following particulars of that closing scene. When informed of its approach, "he slightly changed color, but bore the information with great calmness and composure"—"I have reason to think he retained his senses unto the last, and that whenever he was able, his spirit was in fervent prayer."—"He appeared to be very patient, and perfectly resigned. I never understood that he breathed a murmur, or made the slightest complaint, but clasping his hands upon his breast, yielded up his soul to Him who gave it, and expired without a sigh."

I have stood, my friends, by the death beds of others. Not once nor twice is it that I have witnessed the power of Unitarian Christianity to cheer and calm the dying hour. I have witnessed it in scenes which must not here be more than distantly alluded to, where hope seemed so bright it was changed to certainty, and death was not only placid but triumphant. Elsewhere I have seen it sustaining the meek and pure spirit through agony not to be described, yet that agony subdued by the triumphant feeling of gratitude to Him whose goodness was most deeply felt, then when his afflicting providence was most severe. Alike in the aged and in the young have I witnessed its sustaining power; but never yet have I known an instance of one in life decidedly and religiously a Unitarian, renouncing the support of those pure and tranquil principles in the hour of death.

Brethren of other denominations, yet once more, we claim the character of Evangelical Christians, as sympathising in the Evangelical enterprises of the age. We honor the efforts of the missionary band. We desire to cultivate among ourselves the missionary spirit. Thus far indeed, few in numbers as we have been, and obliged to maintain continually a controversial position in our own land, we have not been able to engage as others have done in efforts for the extension of Christianity in other regions of the earth. Ere long, let us trust, we shall be enabled once more to test the efficacy for the missionary enterprise, of those doctrines which, from the lips of the ancient Arians, converted the barbarous invaders of the Roman Empire. Meantime, we have done and are yet doing, if not all we ought, still enough to show that we, as well as our brethren, feel the importance of the charge committed by our Saviour to his followers. In the sup-

port of sabbath schools, of domestic missions, of the cause of Christian education, and of the various institutions whose object is the relief of misery or the advancement of virtue, our denomination has been steadily and actively engaged. We say not this in a boasting spirit, but as an act of simple justice to those principles which have developed their influence in the exertions of our fellow-believers.

Brethren of this society, let us ever bear in mind that by our own conduct will the faith we hold dear be judged by our fellow-Christians. Claiming the name and character of Evangelical, let the spirit of the Gospel appear in our lives. Let us take heed to our course that nothing in word or deed, on our part, should give occasion to any for lightly esteeming that which we believe to be the truth; and in regulating word and deed, let us take care that our hearts also be right in the sight of God. Let us do, each in his respective place in society, all the good that may be in our power, faithfully discharging our duties in social and in domestic life, just and honorable to all with whom we have dealings, affectionate to our friends, bringing up our children piously and uprightly, distributing to the necessities of the poor, ever ready to shed the balm of consolation into the wounded heart, and both by example and precept, to lead the erring to the feet of our blessed Saviour. If thus we live, it will matter but little to us, if men, yes, even if those we respect and love, reject our claim of brotherhood. He, to whom our service is offered, will, we trust, mercifully accept it; his strength will be near us in our dying hour, his forgiveness blot out our repented sins, and his infinite love receive us to a better world.

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A

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BY REV. J. SCOTT PORTER,
OF BELFAST, IRELAND.

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UNITARIANISM — A BENEVOLENT FAITH.

JOHN XIII. 35.

By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one towards another.

This was the test of membership which the dying Savior bequeathed to his church — the best undoubtedly that could be framed; and yet of all possible or conceivable tests, the only one which the bulk of his professing followers, at least in modern times, have never for one moment thought of employing. We have seen churches asserting that unless we submit our consciences to the yoke of their infallibility, we cannot be disciples of Christ. We have seen churches asserting, that unless we agree with them in every dim mysterious point of disputed theology, we cannot be disciples of Christ. We have seen them declaring that unless we solemnly profess to accord even with the political principles laid down in their creeds, framed in times of ignorance, and turbulence, and civil confusion, we cannot be disciples of Christ; and maintaining that unless we can go with them, even to the length of dooming to everlasting perdition the persons, who, in the exercise of their private judgment, arrive at different conclusions from those which they profess to

have reached, we cannot be disciples of Christ. Many churches have practically said, "Unless ye anathematize, and excommunicate, and devote to condemnation your Christian brethren, — unless you exclude them, and denounce them, and revile them, — ye cannot be disciples of your Savior." Such are the modern tests of Orthodoxy in too many of the churches of our Lord. Alas! how few are there in which the test that the Savior himself has instituted is practically employed: — "*By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one towards another!*" While many are regarded as Orthodox, on the ground of their sectarian zeal and party spirit, how few are willing to admit the Orthodoxy of love!

I cannot but regard the test proposed by our Lord Jesus Christ, in these beautiful and comprehensive words, as the best that ever was invented. Would to God that men had been content to leave the question of discipleship on the footing on which the Savior placed it! Would to God they had been content to confine their definitions within the same limits to which our Lord restricted his! Would to God they had been willing to leave that, unrestricted, which he never restrained, and to allow the liberty which he recognized. But thus it has not been; and I fear we cannot speedily anticipate a time when thus it will be. A calm spectator of characters and events — some of them even of recent occurrence — might be induced to think, that some of our Lord's professing followers read his words as here recorded, with the insertion of a negative; and that they supposed him to have declared, — *By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have* NO *love one towards another:* — no love, no charity, no candor, no forbearance, even with their involuntary and unavoidable mistakes; no feelings

but those of alienation, contempt, and hatred, and abhorrence.

But our Savior's words are very different. He tells us, that our claim to the character of his disciples is to be estimated by the affection which we entertain for our Christian brethren.

The precept which he thus makes a test of discipleship may surely be with safety and advantage employed as a standard of sound doctrine. If the best — the only true, member of the church of Christ — be the man in whose breast the spirit of love has taken up its abode, — that faith must be the soundest, which most strongly and most directly tends to foster and cherish that holy and heavenly temper. The Gospel is the law of love. If, therefore, any form or modification of the Christian faith appears to inculcate principles that are opposed to the great rule of charity, that form or modification of opinion is, so far, inconsistent with the fundamental principles of the Gospel; and must contain within it some admixture of error, — some taint of human weakness, prejudice, or folly, — something, that in some degree, counteracts the benevolent intentions of the great Author and Finisher of our faith. And, on the contrary, if there be found any modification of Christianity which, both in its own nature and in its ascertained results, appears calculated to form the spirit of benevolence, there is so far a presumption, that it is the true faith; — a presumption arising from its accordance with the avowed intention of the Author of our religion. The tree is known by its fruits.

Now it is my aim to show that the system of Christian Unitarianism abides this test; that its principles tend to promote, to strengthen, and to cherish the love of man, to unite all hearts in the bond of peace and charity, and to cause mutual kindness and good will to pervade all ranks

and classes of society. And this I think I can very clearly prove, by showing the natural tendency of Unitarianism to produce the warm and generous sentiments of benevolence, whether we consider the views which it takes of the moral character of God, or of the nature and condition of man.

In the first place, the doctrines which Christian Unitarianism inculcates, respecting the character of the Almighty, are most directly and strongly calculated to strengthen the benevolent affections of our nature. We worship a God whose name is love, and whose dispensations, as we view them, correspond with this character and appellation of their author. We regard him as a Being who loved all his children, who loves them equally and impartially, who makes between them no distinction but that which is occasioned by their different degrees of moral purity. He created all that he might bless all. He desires only their good. He does not relinquish his wishes for their welfare, even when they are froward and disobedient, but still affords them motives, helps, encouragements, to seek his favor and his grace once more; and these he never withholds from those who seek them in sincerity and in truth. We look upon external nature as a monument of the Almighty's mercy. We regard the great work of human redemption, through the Gospel of Christ, as a still more striking display of the benevolence of Him on whom our destiny depends. We see in it the effect and the proof of his own inherent, unpurchased, and unmerited benevolence. Looking upon the character of God in this light, we certainly have a very powerful motive to imitate that spirit of mercy and sympathy which we ascribe to our Father in Heaven. We know that his nature is the perfection of virtue, and that it is our duty and our glory to imitate his attributes, so far as our weak

natures will enable us. We remember that we are required to be children of our Father who is in heaven, and to be perfect as he is perfect. And even were these duties not plainly taught to us in the Scriptures, (which, however, they are most plainly), still they would be obligatory upon us, on the mere ground of consistency — for how could we revere and adore a Being whose moral conduct and character we would scorn to imitate? Our views of God are thus directly calculated to render us, in our sphere of action, and according to the measure of our powers, the imitators of that benevolence, that unrestricted and universal love, which we bless in our heavenly Father.

The case would indeed be very different if we held a system of faith, ascribing to the Almighty, conduct betraying the influence of selfish, partial, cruel, and revengeful feelings. If we considered him as, in the first instance, creating our race on purpose that they might fall into sin — as resolving to visit the punishment of the first sin on the posterity of the primeval parents of mankind, even to the uttermost generation; as being only persuaded to suspend his fury, in some degree, by the voluntary sacrifice of his own Son, who consented himself to bear the punishment of all; as accepting this satisfaction, though it was sufficient for all, only as a ransom for the chosen few; and by an eternal and irreversible decree dooming all the rest of mankind to everlasting wrath and wo, notwithstanding all they could do to mitigate his inexorable indignation, — if we entertained such views of God, we might, perhaps, be led to imitate the conduct thus ascribed to the Deity; and certainly the result would not tend to increase the amount of human benevolence. But as we entertain no such views, the natural feelings of sympathy are allowed their free scope in our hearts; and not only so, but we

have a strong motive in the character of our Beneficent Sovereign, to cultivate the graces of an amiable, merciful, and forgiving disposition, and to practise the law of love.

This tendency of our religious system is strengthened by the views which our religious faith inculcates, respecting the nature and character of our fellow-creatures around us.

We look upon them all as deserving of our affectionate sympathy. We look upon them all as having a noble nature implanted within them — an immortal spirit, that by its high capacities, makes them akin to cherubim and seraphim, and the archangels that watch before the throne of God. We know indeed that their nature is frail, and liable to be drawn aside by temptation from the pursuit of the high destiny for which they were designed by their Creator; but we do not look upon them as utterly depraved and corrupt. We do not look upon them as reprobates who can bring forth nothing but sin. We do not conceive them to be wholly incapable of good, much less to be made opposite to all good, and wholly inclined to all evil, and that continually. If we looked upon our fellow-creatures as deserving this character, I do not see how we could be expected to love them, or how we could do otherwise than loathe and detest them. Nay, if this were true, to loathe and detest them would be a duty; for, if men were only made up of sinful impulses, they ought to be abhorred as sin itself is to be abhorred. There are creeds that represent human nature in this light; there are churches who take these creeds for the confession of their faith; and there are men who profess to regard these creeds as pure, these churches as witnesses for the truth. But no such dogmas prevail among the Unitarians; nor are there any principles in our faith which can either teach or lead us to look with feelings of this description

on our brethren around us. We believe that they are capable of virtue as well as of vice. We believe, that on the whole, the amount of good greatly surpasses the amount of evil. We believe that there are kindly, and generous, and devout influences, which are continually displaying their effects in the conduct even of those who are the most depraved. We believe that a single family, which amidst privations, poverty, and disappointment, still pursues the straight path of integrity, and struggles on with the hardships of its lot, seeking to earn its daily bread by honest industry, in humble reliance on the providing care of God, manifests a degree of virtue and of moral heroism that would compensate for all the crimes of a County Jail. Now, a race in which such examples are to be found, in which they are not of infrequent occurrence, in which such examples largely predominate, as is shown by the fact that society still endures, although the whole business of its vast and complicated concerns, is founded and conducted on the faith which we have in the honor, virtue, and integrity of our fellowmen — such a race we do not, and we cannot regard as beneath our sympathy. We look upon their nature as a rich and prolific soil that well deserves and will abundantly repay the hand of kindly culture ; and for such a race we feel it incumbent on us to make great sacrifices, when thereby we can expect to promote their interest or advantage. We love our brethren therefore, because our religion teaches us, not only that this is a duty, but that they are deserving of our love. We do not believe that either the nature, the circumstances, or the opinions of any of our fellow-creatures can render them outcasts from the love and favor of heaven ; and therefore we do not hold ourselves as justified in excluding them, or any portion of them, from ours. In this respect there is no other form

or modification of Christianity which can be placed in comparison with Unitarianism. All others inculcate, in one shape or other, the doctrine of exclusive salvation, which has a manifest and most powerful tendency to chill the warmth of benevolence, and to deaden the emotions of sympathy. Men holding such opinions may do acts productive of good to their fellow-creatures — but how can they love in their hearts, those whom they believe that the Father of Mercies hates? *or*, if they really love them, how can they love *Him?*

The view which our system of religion teaches us to entertain, respecting our own condition and character, is calculated to foster the spirit of benevolence and sympathy.

We regard ourselves as not separated by any wall of partition from the common circumstances of our brethren around us. We look upon ourselves as partakers of the same nature, capable of the same virtues, liable to the same temptations, subject to the same infirmities, candidates for the same reward, and joint-heirs of the same salvation with our fellow-creatures. If they are weak and frail, so are we. If their virtues are often mixed with inferior principles, and sometimes impeded in their growth, so are ours. If, in certain respects, we have been enabled to avoid errors into which some of our fellow-creatures have fallen, we know that our circumstances have probably assisted to preserve us. We dare not, therefore, arrogantly presume on our moral character or our religious condition, as if it gave any of us a right to say to our fellow-mortals, — Stand off, for I am holier than thou!

The case would be very different, if we looked upon ourselves as the peculiar favorites of heaven; — if we considered, that we and a few others, like-minded with ourselves, monopolized the paternal love of the great Fa-

ther of the universe; — if we supposed, that we had been, before the foundations of the earth were laid, selected to be the heirs of a salvation denied to mankind at large; — and that we were, in consequence, favored with a preternatural communication of Divine grace, and by it so inspired and guided, that we could neither totally nor finally fall away from the state of acceptance, nor err in any point of fundamental doctrine, nor be injured by the sins and follies into which we might occasionally fall. Such opinions as these might puff us up with vain notions of our own importance: they might fill our minds with spiritual pride: they might lead us to regard ourselves as raised to so high a level above the bulk of mankind, as to be divested of the motive and freed from the law of struggling for their welfare. Such opinions have produced, and will produce, though possibly not in all minds in which they are entertained, an abundant crop of religious arrogance. Indeed this is their natural result, unless their influence be counteracted by some opposing principle. But these opinions form no part of our religious creed; — these sentiments are alien to our nature; — they find no place, we hope and trust, either in our heads or in our hearts; — we repudiate and disavow them. Ours is essentially a social faith. It knits our affections with our fellow-creatures; and, placing us upon the footing of a common brotherhood, it necessarily gives rise to the sentiments of brotherly love. We feel that we stand in need of pardoning mercy; and we dare not be unforgiving. We know that our all depends upon the exercise of free and condescending love; and we cannot venture to set an example of severity, which may be turned against ourselves on that great day when our fate will be decided upon an impartial review of our lives and actions; and with especial reference, as our Savior assures us, to the manner in

which we have fulfilled the offices of kindness and humanity. If we are uncharitable therefore, we are the most inconsistent, as well as the most wicked of mortals.

Such are the peculiar motives to the cultivation of enlarged, and liberal, and benevolent dispositions, which are afforded by the Unitarian view of the Gospel of Christ; motives and encouragements in which the members of other denominations, holding opposite opinions from ours, cannot possibly participate. We have every motive to the practice of benevolence which their system affords, and we have these in addition, which their system does not and cannot afford. Hence our religion may indeed be called, with justice, the Law of Love; and its professors may and must, beyond all other men, feel themselves called on to exhibit the demeanor and spirit enjoined by our Savior, when he says, "*By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one towards another.*"

In conclusion, allow me to exhort all Unitàrians who hear me, to preserve the same glorious characteristic of their faith, — its wide and comprehensive benevolence, untarnished and undiminished. Let no political zeal, let no sectarian bitterness, ever interfere with the cultivation and the exercise of their charity. Let us adhere to the test of discipleship given to us by our Divine Master; and let us exemplify in its full measure a precept which is not more lovely in itself, nor more conformable to the spirit of our religion, than, I am happy to think, it is agreeable to our own natural feelings as men, and members of society. Let our churches still be distinguished as pre-eminently the abodes of charity and love.

1st Series. No. 179.

THE

SEVENTEENTH REPORT

OF THE

AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION,

WITH THE

PROCEEDINGS

OF

THE ANNUAL MEETING,

MAY 24, 1842.

BOSTON:

JAMES MUNROE & CO. 134 WASHINGTON STREET.

JUNE, 1842.

Price 6 Cents.

I. R. BUTTS, PRINTER, 2 SCHOOL STREET.

SEVENTEENTH ANNIVERSARY.

The American Unitarian Association celebrated its seventeenth anniversary on Tuesday evening, May 24th, 1842. The members met for the transaction of business at seven o'clock, in the Berry Street Vestry, the Rev. Dr. Nichols, President, in the chair.

Owing to the lateness of the hour, (the members having been detained at another meeting,) the reading of the records of the last annual meeting was omitted.

The Treasurer's Statement of Receipts and Expenditures was then presented and accepted.

Statement of Receipts and Expenditures of the American Unitarian Association, from May 25, 1841, to May 24, 1842.

RECEIPTS.

Balance in the Treasury, May 25, 1841, per account rendered, ...		$752 98
From Auxiliary Societies and Subscriptions, .	2753 62	
" Life Members, ...	305 00	
" Donations from Societies and Individuals,	195 25	
" Sale of Tracts, ...	492 17	

From Subscribers to the General Agency,		60 00	
" Individuals to aid in building Churches in the West,		200 00	
" do. in aid of Unitarian Missions in the West,		28 85	
" American Unitarian Association, amount transferred, being part of the Interest of the Permanent Fund,		700 00	
			4734 89
			$5487 87

EXPENDITURES.

For Printing and Binding Tracts, and Paper,	1411 13	
" Incidental Expenses,	174 64	
" Salary of the General Agent for one year,	1800 00	
" Traveling Expenses of the General Agent,	100 00	
" Rent of Office one year,	200 00	
" Book Agency,	30 00	
" Aid of Unitarian Society, Hillsboro', Ill.	200 00	
" " " " Quincy, "	50 00	
" " " " Calais, Me.	50 00	
" " " " Frankfort, Me.	100 00	
" " " " Topsham, Me.	75 00	
" " Rev. Mr. Whitman's Society, Portland, Me.	100 00	
" " Unitarian Society, Saco, Me.	50 00	
" " " " Gloucester,	50 00	
" " " " Chelsea,	50 00	
" " " " Mansfield,	50 00	
" " " " Rowe,	25 00	
" " " " Brooklyn, Conn.	50 00	

Missionary Services in New York, Illinois, and Wisconsin, viz:

Rev. J. Harrington, Jr.	20
" George Moore,	50
" J. P. Storer,	20
" "	100
" Alonzo Hill,	50

Rev. Dr. Thompson,	30	
" Charles Farley,	25	
" F. A. Whitney,	35	
" A. H. Conant,	100	
	430 00	
		4995 77
Balance,		$492 10

HENRY RICE, *Treasurer.*

Boston, May 24, 1842.

The following sums have been appropriated by the Executive Committee, but not yet drawn from the Treasury, viz.

For Unitarian Society at	Calais, Me.	$50
" " "	St. Louis, Mo.	250
" " "	Chelsea,	50
" " "	Cabotville,	200
" " "	Manchester, N. H.	100
" " "	Lincoln,	50
		$700 00

Boston, June 27, 1842. The subscribers have examined the above account, and find it correctly cast and properly vouched.

Thomas Tarbell, }
Jonathan Howe, } *Auditors.*

The following officers for the ensuing year were then chosen.

OFFICERS
OF THE
AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION.
1842 — 43.

PRESIDENT.

Rev. Ichabod Nichols, D. D., Me.

VICE PRESIDENTS.

Hon. Joseph Lyman, Mass.
" Jonathan Phillips, Mass.
" Charles H. Atherton, N. H.
" Stephen Longfellow, Me.
Henry Wheaton, Esq. N. Y.
James Taylor, Esq. Penn.
Henry Payson, Esq. Md.
Hon. William Cranch, D. C.
Martin L. Hurlburt, Esq. Penn.
Hon. Samuel S. Wilde, Mass.
" Samuel Hoar, "
" Richard Sullivan, "
" Lemuel H. Arnold, R. I.
Benjamin Bakewell, Esq. Penn.
H. J. Huidekoper, Esq. Penn.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE.

Rev. Artemas B. Muzzey,
" George E. Ellis,
" Nathaniel Hall,
} *Directors.*

Rev. Charles Briggs, *General Secretary.*
" Samuel K. Lothrop, *Assistant Secretary.*
Henry P. Fairbanks, Esq. *Treasurer.*

Agreeably to the 10th Article of the Constitution, the following gentlemen were then chosen Councillors of the American Unitarian Association.

Francis Alger, Esq.
William T. Andrews, Esq.
R. W. Bailey,
Isaiah Bangs, Esq.
N. A. Barrett, Esq.
Rev. Samuel Barrett,
Rev. Andrew Bigelow,
Alden Bradford, Esq.
William Brigham, Esq.
E. Cobb, Esq.
C. K. Dillaway, Esq.
Hon. S. Fairbanks,
Rev. F. A. Farley,
Albert Fearing, Esq.
Dr. J. F. Flagg,
C. Francis, D. D.
Rev. Ezra S. Gannett,
Rev. F. W. P. Greenwood,
S. Greele, Esq.
Rev. James D. Green,
Rev. E. B. Hall,
Rev. Alonzo Hill,
James Kendall, D. D.
John Lamson, Esq.
Peter Mackintosh, Esq.
Samuel May, Esq.
Rev. Henry A. Miles,
Rev. J. H. Morison,
Rev. Samuel Osgood,
John Owen, Esq.
Francis Parkman, D. D.
Rev. Ephraim Peabody,
Hon. Jonathan Phillips,
Hon. Stephen C. Phillips,
Rev. J. Pierpont,
John Prentiss, Esq.
L. G. Pray, Esq.
Wm. Pomroy, Esq.
Rev. George Putnam,
Henry Rice, Esq.
Rev. C. Robbins,
John G. Rogers, Esq.
Henry B. Rogers,
Bejamin Seaver, Esq.
W. R. Sumner, Esq.
Rev. C. Stetson,
Hon. R. Sullivan,
Robert G. Shaw, Esq.
Rev. Moses G. Thomas,
Rev. J. W. Thompson,
James Walker, D. D.
Henry Ware, Jr. D. D.
Rev. Jason Whitman,
Hon. Sidney Willard,
Rev. A. Young.

Henry Rice, Esq. having declined a re-election, the following vote, presented by Rev. Mr. Thayer, of Beverly, was passed; —

Voted, That the thanks of this body be returned to Henry Rice, Esq., for his long, devoted, and gratuitous services as Treasurer of this Association.

Robert Waterston and Prince Hawes, Esqs., were chosen Trustees of the Permanent Fund of the Association.

At half past seven o'clock the Association proceeded to the Federal Street Church to attend the public exercises of the occasion. Prayers were offered by Rev. Samuel Ripley, of Waltham. After which the Report of the Executive Committee was read by the General Secretary.

SEVENTEENTH ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE.

The Executive Committee, in presenting the Seventeenth Annual Report, would congratulate the members of the Association on its prosperous condition. During the past year a wider field of usefulness has been opened; and friends and benefactors to the work in which we are

engaged have been multiplied. A kind Providence has, indeed, blessed our labors, and demands of us expressions of gratitude. We feel that we are engaged in a truly benevolent and holy cause. Our great purpose is, the diffusion of Christian truth, the promotion of practical religion, and the advancement of the kingdom of Christ. The objects of the Association are now mostly of a missionary character. We wish to express Christian sympathy to all who are denied the religious privileges we enjoy, to throw open the closed doors of churches in all the destitute societies of the denomination, to send ministers of the Gospel into the waste places of Zion, and provide sustenance for those whose souls are ready to perish.

TRACT DEPARTMENT.

We have devoted a good deal of attention to the Tract department; and aimed to adapt our tracts to the wants of the times. And we are happy to find that they have been instrumental of much good, have removed prejudice, dispelled doubt, and inspired many with a deeper sense of religion. We learn from our missionaries and other correspondents, that there is an increasing demand for them in every part of the country. They are a great source of comfort and improvement to thousands, and especially to those, who have left their homes and churches in New England, and gone into the new parts of our country, where they never hear the sound of the Sabbath bell, and seldom the voice of the preacher; and where their greatest want is a religious one.

One of our preachers in the West, Rev. Mr. Harrington, remarks thus respecting them. "After I have preached

in a 'new place,' on some point of doctrine perhaps, I ask the congregation if they will carefully read certain Tracts, which I have to distribute. There is always a more than willingness to receive them. In this way a hundred or more may be disposed of at a time. Of those which you send us, I intend to keep an account of the distribution, to ascertain, as far as possible, the effect of their messages. I wish to *prove* to you, that they speak effectually, and are received graciously."

Another preacher in that part of the country, Rev. Mr. Moore, gives a striking instance of the power of these Tracts upon the mind and heart of an individual who had read them. "He seemed, he says, like one just emerged from a state of darkness into marvellous light. Our system of faith was altogether a different thing from what he had heard it represented by religionists. Now this man, he adds, is a representative of a large class of men throughout the West, who cannot receive the gospel in that mode in which it is usually presented, but who will receive it in a rational mode. Such men are to be affected, as this man has been, by means of our Tracts, which are very efficient preachers."

We have published the past year from 60 to 70,000 Tracts; and new editions of six. This is a larger number than we have published in any previous year.

They are on the following subjects;

"The Death of Christ," by Rev. Geo. G. Ingersoll. "Unitarianism a Devotional Faith," and "Unitarianism a Benevolent Faith," by Rev. J. Scott Porter. "The Coming of Christ," by Rev. A. P. Peabody. "Short Prayers for the Morning and Evening of Every Day in the Week." "On the Uses of the Communion,

and the Propriety of a General Attendance upon it," by Rev. Dr. Dewey. "How is it that ye have no Faith,' by Rev. Henry A. Miles. "Domestic Worship," by Rev. Caleb Stetson. "The Apparent Darkness of God's Providence," by Rev. Dr. Brazer. "Sympathy in Congregations," by Rev. Frederick A. Farley. "The Unitarian's Appeal," by Rev. S. G. Bulfinch. — These, together with the Annual Report, constitute the 15th volume of our Tracts.

BOOK AND PAMPHLET SOCIETY.

The Book and Pamphlet Society has always been more or less connected with us in its operations. It has furnished its depository in a great measure with our publications; and has thus essentially aided us. It has been extensively useful the past year; having circulated from 18 to 20,000 Tracts, besides a large number of Books.

BOOKS FOR THE WEST.

There has recently been an increased interest in the moral condition of the denomination; and particularly in that of our brethren at the West. Besides other manifestations of this interest, it may be seen in the aid afforded them by donations of Books, Periodicals, and Tracts. Within the last three months there have been sent to the Secretary for gratuitous distribution in the West, from 25 to 30,000 copies of Books, Tracts, &c. The most of which have been sent into New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Kentucky, Missouri, Illinois, and Iowa Territory.

One of our missionaries in Illinois, to whom a large

number of these books were sent, says, in a letter to the Secretary. "I would express to each and all, who have thus remembered our wants, our fervent gratitude, and our hope that they will receive a rich reward, not only in the satisfaction which attends a generous, noble action, but in the success which shall attend their efforts to disseminate those views of religion, which have brought peace and joy to their own hearts. They have not only our blessing, but the blessing of God. And when they and we have finished our earthly course, the truths which we cherish will live and glow with a still brighter effulgence to enlighten and bless the world."

BOOK AGENCY.

It was recommended by the Council of the Association, at their last annual meeting, that the Executive Committee should appoint an Agent to go into all our towns and villages, and supply the denomination with such books as are needed. And we would remark, that such an agent has been appointed, and has for several months been engaged in the duties of his agency. We should be happy to give some account of the progress he has made; but, owing to his unexpected absence at this time, it is not in our power.

AUXILIARY ASSOCIATIONS.

As our means of usefulness are, in a great measure, derived from Auxiliary Associations; and as these associations are instrumental in promoting Christian knowledge and piety among their members, the Committee have been desirous of seeing them multiplied. The Secretary has, therefore, made it an important object to de-

liver addresses, and aid in establishing them. They are generally in a flourishing condition, and a deeper interest appears to be manifested in them than formerly.

The number formed and re-organized during the year, is thirty. Others have been visited, and a correspondence has been carried on with most of them.

LIFE MEMBERS.

The number added to the list of life members is twelve, making in all three hundred and eighty-six. They are the following:

Joseph M. Smith, Esq., Boston; Rev. Jasen Whitman, Portland, Me.; Rev. Curtis Cutler, Peterboro', N. H.; Hon. Joseph Davis, Northboro'; Dea. Ezra Abbot, Wilton, N. H.; Rev. John Parkman, Dover, N. H.; Samuel B. King, Esq., Taunton; Geo. A. Crocker, Esq., Taunton; Rev. J. I. T. Coolidge, Boston; Rev. C. C. Shackford, Boston; Rev. E. H. Sears, Lancaster; and Mrs. Abigail Manley, Boston.

DESTITUTE SOCIETIES.

By an extensive correspondence we have learned the religious wants of the denomination; and are more and more convinced of the importance and duty of supplying them.

The Secretary has devoted a portion of his time to visiting destitute societies. The number of such societies, or of societies needing temporary assistance, in New England, is not far from fifty. Many of them are old societies, and have been weakened by sectarian influences. They are struggling on, and struggling hard to maintain public

worship; but find it impossible, unless some aid is afforded them. And they feel that they must look to us, and us alone, for the help they need. Some of these societies are obliged to close their churches a part of the year. This is a privation which can hardly be understood by those who have never experienced it. It is painful to see a church closed on the Sabbath; and the people of a village indolently and unprofitably passing away the hours of that holy day. The moral influence is bad upon all, and especially upon the young.

We deeply sympathize with those of our brethren who are thus deprived of privileges most dear to their hearts. And we sincerely hope that ample means for relieving their wants will, in the course of the year, be put into our hands.

We have afforded aid the past year directly, and by the services of our missionaries, to twenty-four destitute societies. Of these, fourteen were in New England, four in the State of New York, and six in the Western States.

MISSIONARY OPERATIONS.

It has been a leading object with the Committee to find out the most important places for missionary operations, and to supply them with good and devoted ministers. The field for such operations is, indeed, large; for there are communities of Christians of our faith in almost every part of the United States, who are suffering for want of religious instruction, and who are willing to make many and great sacrifices for the support of Christian institutions. It is believed that there are at least fifty

places, besides those in New England, where our missionaries are wanted, and where they might labor with great success. A call for them comes to us from the length and breadth of our land, from Georgia, Alabama, and Florida, at the south, and from Missouri, Iowa, and Canada, at the West and North. Our neighbors and friends, our brothers and children, have gone from New England into the new and distant parts of the country. They still cherish the faith of their fathers. They sigh for the churches they left behind them, and for such religious instruction as accords with their views and feelings. And in their destitution they look to us for aid. They look to us as brethren and friends, as Christians of the like precious faith; and they feel, and justly too, that they have claims upon us. It is to such that we have sent missionaries. And our only regret is, that we have been able to send so few; that so large a portion of the vineyard should be left without a hand to cultivate it.

We are not supplying half the wants we see and sympathize with; nor doing half the good we might, had we the means. And if you will put into our hands double the funds we now have at our disposal, we will show you by our next Annual Report, that they have all been usefully expended; have relieved pressing wants; caused the hearts of many to rejoice; and brought many nearer to their Savior and their God.

The number of missionaries employed by us the past year, for longer or shorter periods, is twelve. Their instructions have been gratefully received, and their labors have been blessed.

We might quote largely from our correspondence to show the importance of Western missions, and that we

have not labored in vain to support them. A few extracts, however, from a letter of one of our missionaries, Rev. Mr. Conant, will suffice.

"Your Association, he remarks, has already merited the confidence of the East, and the gratitude of the West, for what has been effected by your timely and generous aid. Many of the small societies which were springing up in our Western cities and towns have thus been kept in existence, and have since become not only able to sustain themselves without farther assistance, but to contribute in turn to the cause of benevolence, and the spread of truth and righteousness. If the people of the East had a just idea of the present condition of the West, and the vast amount of good that might be effected by timely action, I have, from my knowledge of their liberality, the fullest assurance that your Association would not want the means to afford all necessary aid to our destitute societies, and to those places where societies are needed, and may easily be established by a little well directed effort.

"Few in New England are, or can be made, fully sensible of their duty to the West. Their sons and brothers are here; many of them struggling amidst the difficulties of first settlement to establish the literary, moral, and religious institutions of their early home, rendered doubly dear by surrounding trials and the contrast of former privileges with present privations. — Multitudes are living destitute of religious instruction, (or any thing which deserves the name,) and becoming more and more regardless of religion, and fast falling into habits of vice."

"Men may regard the doings of your Association as comparatively of little consequence: but when the tem-

pest, and earthquake, and fire of worldly ambition have passed by, the quiet labors in which you have been engaged for the establishment of a pure and elevating faith, and for the salvation of men, will, like the still small voice, declare the presence of the Lord ; and men's souls will be stirred in their depths by the truths and principles for which you have labored ; while the principal concerns and anxieties which now agitate the minds of men will have passed into oblivion."

THE PROGRESS OF UNITARIANISM.

The Committee have taken some pains to learn the condition and prospects of the denomination, and the progress our views are making in this country and in Europe. And we are happy, from authentic sources, to make the following statement.

" In 1820, there was not a single congregation, avowedly Unitarian, in Ireland ; now there are thirty-nine ; and the number continues to increase every year."

" In 1826, Dr. Chalmers boasted for Scotland, that all the Church accommodation possessed by Unitarians in that country put together would only afford seats for fifteen hundred people ; and that one half of them were unoccupied. This boast was then true. Now, a single congregation alone, the Glasgow Unitarian congregation, numbers a body of people connected with it, greater than Dr. Chalmers assigned, sixteen years ago, to the whole kingdom. Eleven other societies have been formed, or revived, and there is a clear prospect of more and greater increase."

"In England, it is only twenty-four years since Parliament removed the penalties by which the profession of Unitarian opinions was visited. There are now in England about three hundred Unitarian congregations."

"On the continent of Europe, Unitarian Christianity is steadily on the increase. In Switzerland, it is, and has been for some years, triumphant in the church and city of Geneva, the chosen abode of John Calvin, and is gaining ground in the other cantons. In France it is making progress among the Protestants. Indeed, in every country of Europe, where the profession of religion is free, Unitarian views are largely held, and are making progress. It is estimated, that in Holland, Switzerland, France, and Germany, it is the faith of not less than one half of those, who have renounced the Church of Rome."

"In 1825 the whole number of our societies in the United States, i. e. of Congregational Unitarian Societies, was one hundred and twenty. It is now about three hundred. Besides these, there are, in the United States, nearly two thousand congregations that reject the Trinity and its kindred doctrines. They belong chiefly to the sects denominated Christians, Universalists, and Friends or Quakers."

It gives us pleasure to state, that measures have recently been taken in Boston to raise funds sufficient to meet the spiritual wants of the denomination. The objects to be accomplished are three; to educate young men for the ministry; to aid destitute societies; and support missionaries. Most of the funds, which shall be raised, will be put into the hands of the Society for the Promotion of Theological Education, the Evangelical Missionary Society, and this Association. This truly Christian movement will, we trust, be seconded in all our

societies. It originated mainly with a few devoted laymen, who have been untiring in their efforts to diffuse abroad a missionary spirit that we may, as a class of Christians, do all that belongs to us in the great work of extending the kingdom of Christ, and saving the souls of men. We confidently hope that this spirit will prevail among us; and that ere long its fruits will be manifested. Are there not, we ask, great responsibilities resting upon us? Does not the command of our Savior, to "preach the Gospel to every creature," extend to *us*, and teach us a most important duty? And how can we answer it to our consciences and to our God, unless we manifest a deeper interest in the moral condition of our fellow beings, and do more for the spread of the gospel and the salvation of men?

There is much in the condition and prospects of the denomination at this time that is encouraging, and much to inspire confidence in our views of religion. We might speak more of the progress of these views, and say much that might be interesting about the multiplication of societies in different parts of New England, at the South and the West; but we had much rather speak of what is infinitely more important, our spiritual progress; our growth in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. The great inquiry with us should be, are we Christians? Christians not in name only, but in deed and in truth? Have we a *living* faith? And do we show our faith by our works? Are we imbued with the spirit of Christ? And are we living for God, for the soul, for eternity?

There is, we are happy to learn and to state, an unusual interest in religion throughout the denomination.

There are many in all our societies, who were never so much alive to the interests of the soul and eternity, who are taking deep and solemn views of Christian truth, and inquiring what they shall do to be saved. The spirit of God is moving in our churches. It is devoutly to be wished that this interest may increase yet more and more, and become universal among us; that we may all be, indeed, the sincere and devoted followers of the Savior; such, as in the great day of account, he will own and bless.

We cannot close without referring to those dispensations of Providence which have recently taken from this Association several of its valued members and friends. Within a few months six of the clergy have been called from their duties and labors on earth to their rest and reward in heaven. It was but a few days before his death, — perhaps the last time his venerable form was seen along our streets, — that the much esteemed Dr. Harris called at the office of the Secretary, to do something for the spiritual wants of the West. And the last time our younger brother, the beloved Whitney, raised his voice in the house of God, it was to recommend to his flock the objects of this Association, and to enlist their sympathies in the cause of missions.

Divine Providence, in these dispensations, speaks to us, — to us all; and calls us to Christian watchfulness, to increased fidelity in duty, and to an immediate performance of the work given us to do.

Rev. Mr. Thomas, moved the acceptance of the Report.

He rose, he said, partly to break the momentary pause which followed the unexpected announcement from the Chair of the unavoidable absence of the gentleman to whom all were expecting to listen, and partly because he was moved to do so by the interest manifested in the crowded attendance, and by the good tidings given in the Report of the Secretary.

From these manifestations of increasing piety and activity in the Christian cause, Mr. T. adverted to a single topic in the Report as having with him a peculiar interest.

In 1826 he had visited several of the principal cities west of the Alleghany Mountains, — as far west as Missouri. He was the first who had gone beyond Pittsburg in connexion with this Association. Then there was not a single Unitarian Society beyond the limits of Pennsylvania; and all that he was able to do, was to seek out here and there an individual with whom to deposit a few tracts, and to engage those individuals as correspondents of the Association, with a view to a further supply of tracts, provided those on hand should be disposed of. He remarked that this was all that had then been done in connexion with the Association in regard to Cincinnati, Louisville, and St. Louis. That within two or three years he had revisited some portion of that country, though not under the auspices of the Association, and had found ministers, churches, and full congregations established for years, where before he could find but here and there an individual, that recognized the faith of Unitarian Christianity.

Under these circumstances that portion of the Report which spoke of so many societies, churches, missionaries,

and calls for missionaries all over the broad West, was to him a demonstration of the progress of gospel truth, most impressive and gratifying.

Mr. T. closed with saying, that he doubted not that the new life and devotedness which seemed to pervade our denomination here at the East, would prove the best guaranty for the means of extended missionary operations in the West, where they were so gratefully received, and as it appeared to him, so wonderfully efficient.

Rev. O. A. Brownson of Boston, said; — With your leave, Mr. President, I would make a few remarks. I presume my rising to speak is wholly unexpected. One year ago I little thought that I should be here to-night for the purpose of addressing this meeting; and could I have been then assured that such would be the fact, I should have been not less surprised than I presume all present are to hear again my voice in this place. But, sir, we can little foresee what changes Providence has in store for us. I had fancied that I should never rise again to address a meeting of Unitarians. But my feelings have undergone no slight change within the year past, and I rise, sir, to tell you how truly I sympathize with the purpose which calls us together this evening, how deep an interest I take in the prosperity of that cause to which this Association stands pledged.

I will not deny, sir, that for some time I had well nigh despaired of the Unitarian movement. I felt that Unitarians were likely to prove false to the work God in his providence had given them to do; that they would abandon their efforts to bring out and establish for the world a higher, purer, more rational and yet more living form

of Christian faith than had hitherto obtained; and I began to fear that for long ages yet must be delayed our hopes of seeing Christ reappear in his glory, and for long ages yet must the world be given up to the dominion of bigotry, ignorance, cant, hypocrisy, and superstition. In a word, sir, I despaired of Unitarianism, and pronounced it dead. I was wrong. I have seen within the last few months, I see here to-night, indubitable proofs that I was wrong. I see now, sir, that my inability formerly to perceive any signs of life in the Unitarian body, did not arise from there being no life there, but from the deadness of my own feelings, from my own want of true spiritual life.

The world, sir, wears to us always the hue of our own feelings. When we are cold and languid, all around us seems to want warmth and energy. The deadness so many have seen in Unitarian Christianity, is after all the deadness of their own hearts. We see no life in others because we have none in ourselves. When we are ourselves alive, when we are active and hopeful, all on whom we look are to us living, full of activity and hope. Not that we project the life we seem to see, but because our own life brings us into that condition in which we can see what before was to us invisible. When we say of a given denomination, that it has no life, we shall do well to bear in mind that it is possible that the fault is in us. All nature lives. There is no death. Were our life but energetic enough, we could detect life everywhere, even in what passes with us ordinarily for mere brute matter. I own, sir, that my estimate of the life of Unitarians was formed from my own, and proceeded from my own want of true, deep, energetic, spiritual life. A change in this respect has come over me within the last year.

My feelings have been quickened. I feel religion, all-important as I have long considered it, to be a matter of far deeper concernment than ever, and of a far more binding obligation; I come here to-night feeling more alive to its requirements, more desirous of devoting myself and all that I have to its furtherance; and consequently the more life and energy am I able to detect in this Unitarian Association. No, sir, Unitarian Christianity is not dead, is not dying; cannot die; it is immortal.

Sir, we have had, it need not be denied, many difficulties to contend with. We have had a vast variety of opinions in our midst. We have had nearly all kinds of *isms* brought out among us. These have divided, disturbed us, and for a time checked our outward growth. But these, instead of being signs of death, or approaching death, as some of us have wrongly fancied, are signs of life. They show that thought is active in our bosom, and that our minds are still young, fresh and vigorous. But these *isms* are all out now. All extremes of opinions have found vent among us, — have uttered themselves. The tendency with us can no longer be to extremes, to disunion, but the reverse. It must henceforth be to a broad, catholic, affirmative faith, to which I see indubitable signs, that we are rapidly attaining, and which when attained will be a faith with which we can overcome the world.

I have often heard in this place strong reasons assigned, why we are not wrong in making efforts to spread our faith. Sir, I do not feel the necessity of assigning those reasons. I think it would be more pertinent to attempt to show some good reason why we should *not* make such efforts. Opinions are deeds; faith is a power. It is not,

it never can be a matter of indifference what opinions are entertained, what faith is adopted. We do not embrace a merely negative faith ; nor are we required to act only on the defensive. We are rapidly passing from that negative state into which we were unavoidably thrown for a moment, to an affirmative faith, to great and positive doctrines, on which even now depend the life and salvation of the world. These doctrines constitute a positive faith, a faith that we have not only the right to embrace, but which we are bound to propagate ; which we may not only accept, but which nobody has, or can have in our view, if we really, honestly entertain it, the moral or religious right to reject. It is not for us then to defend ourselves, but for those who reject our faith to defend themselves. They and not we are those whom our faith indicts.

As this affirmative faith, towards which we are now rapidly tending, develops itself more clearly to our mental vision, we shall cease to inquire out reasons to justify us for showing some degree of earnestness and zeal for its spread. Sir, we are approaching this faith ; I see our progress towards it ; I see all hearts eager for it ; all eyes and hands stretched out towards it. We shall obtain it. It will be that higher manifestation of Christian truth, of Christian Life, which we have all been bearing witness to, and for which the church prays every time it repeats the petition, "Thy kingdom come." Then we shall not be afraid of proselytism ; shall not be afraid of being propagandists. We shall not be afraid of being zealous. We shall be fully alive ; our hearts will be full of zeal for God and for man, and we shall not be afraid of being too much in earnest, but shall feel the fire burn in our souls, shall go

forth and speak words of fire, that shall burn from heart to heart, and set the whole world on fire with truth and love.

Sir, I have not risen to make a speech. I have risen merely to bear my testimony to the cause in which you are engaged, to speak to you of the hopes I entertain, and so far as my sympathy can count for any thing, to bid you go forward in your great and good work with full confidence in the Great Head of the Church, that he is about to manifest himself anew to the world, and that a purer faith, a higher order of truth, a broader, richer, and a more truly spiritual life, will be manifested in our midst, and men will again become believers, and God be glorified in their lives, and the whole earth blessed by their piety, wisdom and love.

Rev. James F. Clarke said, — That he had been so much gratified by the remarks of the gentleman who had preceded him, that he felt induced to say something also. Mr. C. then proceeded to speak of the present condition of the denomination, and referred to an article in a late number of the Christian Examiner upon this subject. This article spoke of every reform as necessarily passing through three stages, the first of which was that of negation, the second one of inaction, the third of affirmation. Agreeing in the main with the doctrine of this article, Mr. C. said, he thought that it partook perhaps of the tendency of the school of philosophy to which it belonged, of giving to moral revolutions the character of a natural process rather than of a work of the will. The evil of this was to lead us to suppose that moral revolutions would go on of themselves, whether men were disposed to do their

duties toward them or not. Mr. C. said that he hoped, with the writer of that article, that the Unitarian denomination was passing into a stage of greater spiritual activity than it had ever before manifested. Yet he thought that it might easily miss of that stage, and perish in that of inaction, provided it was not faithful to its mission. At all events, he firmly believed that in twenty years from this time it would either be one of the most active denominations in this country, or else that it would be swept away from the face of the land, and the places which now know it would know it no more.

Rev. Mr. Livermore, of Keene, remarked: — Since the interest of the meeting is thrown upon the strictly extemporaneous efforts of those present, and a pause occurs at this time, I rise to make a few remarks. The alternative has been suggested by the last gentleman, of our being twenty years hence the most flourishing denomination in the land, or of our being utterly swept from it. Without adopting that idea fully, I yet trust that the first part will be made good rather than the last. There are indications that it will be so, there are omens of good to come, prophecies of a better state of things among us. Indeed, growth, progress, is stamped upon every object in creation, whether animal, vegetable, or mineral. Such is the law of the universe. To this law we as a denomination are subject. We have grown, we have advanced. There has been a numerical increase, an outward extension of the limits of Unitarianism, according to the Report just read; and still more and better, there has been an internal, spiritual growth, growth in grace, a newly awakened interest in religion, the natu-

ral and expected result of a more advanced stage of the Unitarian Reform. First, there was thought, controversy, or as it has been called, *protest* against the corruptions of Christianity, the errors of other sects; but now comes feeling, zeal, and what has been termed, an *affirmative faith*. This is the true way. This is natural. Such is the law of growth, progress. The views, contained in the volume of sermons (Dr. Dewey's) published some years ago, place the subject of religious sensibility and zeal on the right ground. If we would love God and man, Jesus and goodness, we must think, reflect, spread out the holy theme before us, and survey it, not blindly, and at once demand the glow of heart without using the natural means to produce it. Thought, and thought alone, can kindle a true and healthy interest and devotion.

There is hope and encouragement, therefore, in the past and present state of our denomination. We are indeed to work out our salvation with fear and trembling; we have reason to be humble and penitent in view of our short comings and want of earnest zeal, and to resolve to do better; but we are not less to remember that it is God that worketh in us both to will and to do of his good pleasure, — worketh in us as a denomination, and maketh us grow in one body, even Christ. The state of societies and churches is various. Some are still and must be for a long time to come in an attitude of protest, on the defensive, because they are embosomed in communities hostile to our views. Such is the condition of our frontier places. Many who belong to these societies are either scarcely weaned from their old faith, or were more opposed to orthodoxy, than in love with Unitarian Christianity. They partake necessarily more of the negative

than the positive. They have not acquired that strong, implicit faith in their new position, which they enjoyed in their old one before they began to inquire. Luther complained to his wife of a want of fervent devotion after he broke away from the Roman Catholic church, and before he felt himself at home in the new faith. But with time came fervor and the purest sensibility. Where Unitarian Christianity has flourished, even for one short generation, as is the case in this favored metropolis, we can see its genuine fruits, its generous results; we see what it would accomplish everywhere if time were only given for its complete influences to be felt. Where is there a more direct application of religion to the concerns of life than here? Where is the tone of public feeling and opinion more correct; where more honesty and integrity? Even other sects have confessed that this is the purest city according to its size in Christendom. Where is more true benevolence manifested in relieving the poor, and more love of man practically shown in the grand objects of Education and Reform. In other towns and cities in this vicinity the same holds true in part. And in this state, where there is a far larger number of Unitarian churches than in all the rest of the country put together, there is the highest state of Christian civilization which is to be found probably on the face of the globe, of the same size and population.

Rev. F. A. Farley, of Brooklyn, N. Y., then addressed the meeting. He said that he came to the meeting with no intention of speaking, but found he could not sit still. He had indeed almost pledged himself to let the week of anniversaries pass, so far as he was concerned,

silently. But it would not do; and he rose to say a word because he could not keep it. He could not, if he would, hold his peace. His heart beat in unison with the chord which had this evening been so well and so faithfully struck, and it would seek utterance by the voice.

He trusted all felt it good to be there. Good, especially, because of what our eyes see, and our ears hear, from all quarters, of the improved and improving state of things among *us*,—in *our* own Zion. It was but two years ago, in this house, on the very spot where he stood, that he gave vent to feelings of lamentation and sadness, over the apathy and coldness, which had, for a long while been creeping upon us; and he had, at the moment, a striking testimony to the truth of what he said, in the bare walls and meagre audience which he then addressed But what do we see now? The accustomed place of our solemn gathering together, he would not say crowded, but still well and largely filled; and the kindling eye, and the evident interest pervading all who are here, giving eloquent tokens that it is not in vain that we are united together, as a body of the disciples of the Lord Jesus. He well remembered being then called by more than one of his professional brethren, even, either very sick or very crazy, on account of what he then said; but he rejoiced to know that some, at least, who thus regarded it at the time, had since acknowledged that he was right A new and a better state of things has begun. As a body of Christians, we are becoming, he believed, more alive to the great, vital, spirit-stirring, and spiritual truth which we have received and proclaimed. The need of a more hearty engagedness in religion, as a most solemn reality, having most momentous and intimate connections

with the life of every individual soul, is being more and more felt. One of those who had preceded him, had declared his belief, that within twenty years we should, as a sect, either be eminently successful and powerful, or cease to be. For his part, he believed, that, let us only be entirely faithful to our views of Gospel truth, which to us must, if we have any sincerity, be identical with the Gospel itself; and those views would within twenty years be largely triumphant. Already there are signs of this. Some of the great principles for which we had most strenuously contended, are now accepted and contended for by the dominant sects, and with the increase of a true and devotional spirit among us, by which the morality which we rightly valued, might be sanctified and made stable, our success was made sure. The cause of the slowness of our progress heretofore, must be chiefly found in our own unfaithfulness, and not in the views themselves. In them his confidence was never greater, and if we will only do them full justice in our daily walk, and in our entire lives, there is nothing to apprehend.

The Rev. Mr. Eliot, of Saint Louis, Mo., said, — That he was happy in being able to concur with those who had taken an encouraging view of the present condition of our churches. Such a view can certainly be taken of the churches west of the mountains. Without exception, they are in a healthy state; not yet large, but vigorous and growing. The church in Cincinnati was struggling, a few years ago, under a heavy debt and many discouraging circumstances. Now the debt has been liquidated, through the great exertions of a few generous individuals, and every prospect is fair. Whatever can

be accomplished by a devoted pastor and a united people, will be done there. In Louisville, Rev. Mr. Heywood has been laboring for two years, with satisfactory results. That society was never in a more healthy or hopeful condition than now. And there is no doubt that the continued labors of that excellent minister will secure to the good cause continued and increasing success. In Hillsboro', Illinois, Mr. Huntington, has charge of a small society, to whose spiritual interests he still devotes himself with singular self-devotedness. Such an example is the most eloquent preaching. In Quincy, brother Moore, and in Chicago, brother Harrington are reaping the good fruits of indefatigable labors. Their societies are vigorous and free from debt. They exert a strong and beneficial influence in their respective communities. In St. Louis, the society although yet small, is steadily increasing, and an addition to the House of Worship is now in progress. Thus, by a cursory examination, we see cause of encouragement. Thus far, our progress in the West has been, at least, fully commensurate with our exertions. We have reason to be fully satisfied. We ought to feel stimulated to greater exertions.

We regret that we have been able to procure but very imperfect sketches of the addresses; and that we could not obtain the remarks of Rev. Mr. Lothrop and George Channing, Esq. George B. Emerson, Esq., made a few remarks, and moved the acceptance of the Report. The Report was accepted, and the meeting was closed by singing the "Dismission Hymn."

OFFICERS

AND

COMMITTEES OF THE COUNCIL.

The annual meeting of the Council of the Association was held at the Berry Street Vestry, May 26th, 1842, Hon. J. G. Rogers declining re-election, Hon. Richard Sullivan was chosen Chairman, and Rev. Samuel Osgood, Secretary of the Council for the ensuing year.

The Chairman then nominated the following gentlemen for the several Committees.

On Finance — Hon. Stephen Fairbanks, Samuel Greele, Esq., Rev. S. K. Lothorp, N. A. Barrett and Samuel May, Esqrs.

On Missions — Rev. Dr. Ware, Jr., Rev. Dr. Parkman, Rev. A. B. Muzzey, Albert Fearing, Esq., Hon. Richard Sullivan.

On Parishes — Rev. Dr. Walker, Hon. Jona. Phillips, Rev. E. S. Gannett, Rev. Samuel Barrett, William Pomeroy, Esq.

On Tracts — C. K. Dillaway, Esq., Rev. George Ripley, Rev. E. Peabody, Rev. Dr. Francis, Lewis G. Pray, Esq.

On the Anniversary — Rev. Alexander Young, Rev. Charles Briggs, William Brigham, Esq., Hon. Sidney Willard, Rev. Alonzo Hill.

CONSTITUTION

OF THE

AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION.

1. The name of this Association shall be THE AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION.

2. The object of this Association shall be to diffuse the knowledge and promote the interests of pure Christianity throughout our country.

3. Unitarian Christians throughout the United States shall be invited to unite and co-operate with this Association.

4. An annual subscription of one dollar shall constitute a person a member so long as such subscription shall be paid; and a subscription of thirty dollars shall constitute a person a member for life.

5. The officers shall be a President, fifteen Vice-Presidents, a General Secretary, who shall have the care of all the business and interests of the Association under the control of the Executive Committee, an Assistant Secretary who, in case of the absence or sickness of the General Secretary, shall perform such duties of a Recording and Corresponding Secretary as may require immediate attention; a Treasurer and three Directors.

6. The Directors, Secretaries, and Treasurer shall constitute the Executive Committee, who shall meet once in each month, and shall have the direction of the funds and operations of the Association.

7. An annual meeting shall be held at such time and place as the Executive Committee shall deem advisable, of which due notice shall be given, and at which officers shall be chosen, reports be made, and any other business be transacted, which may come before the Association.

8. The Executive Committee shall have power to fill any vacancies which may occur among the officers between any two annual meetings.

9. Any amendments of this Constitution shall be proposed at one annual meeting, and may be accepted at the next anniversary, if two-thirds of the members present be in favor of such amendments.

10. There shall also be a Council of the Association consisting of not less than twenty-five, nor more than ———— members, to be nominated by the presiding officer, and chosen by a hand vote at the annual meeting, whose duty it shall be, whenever it is necessary, in conjunction with the Executive Committee, to consider and determine what further measures may be taken to increase the usefulness of the Association, by what means they may be carried into execution, and in what manner funds can be provided for the purpose. The Council shall hold a stated annual meeting on the Thursday succeeding the annual meeting of the Association, at four o'clock, P. M. The Executive Committee shall call special meetings whenever they shall deem it necessary, or at the request of any five members of the Council; and twelve members shall constitute a quorum. The powers of the Executive Committee with regard to all matters not acted upon by the Council are to remain the same as heretofore.

Vote passed by the Executive Committee, September, 23, 1826, as amended March, 30, 1830.

Resolved, That every member of the Association be entitled to one copy of every tract *of the first and second series* published by the Association *during the year for which his subscription is entered.*

Vote of the Executive Committee, passed January 4, 1826.

Voted, That no society be recognized as auxiliary to this Association, the terms of subscription to which are less than those required in the Constitution of this Association.

Vote passed by the Executive Committee, June 20, 1833.

Voted, That the 4th article of the Constitution be so construed, that any one who shall pay thirty dollars for the General Agency of the American Unitarian Association, either at once, or by annual instalments within five years, shall be considered a life member.

CLERGYMEN MEMBERS FOR LIFE

The following Clergymen have been made members for life of the American Unitarian Association, by the donation of thirty dollars or more, principally from ladies of their respective societies

Abbot, Abiel.
Alden, Seth.
Alger, Horatio.
Allen, Joseph.
*Andrews, William.
Arnold, A. C. L.
*Bancroft, Aaron, D. D.
Barrett, Samuel.
Bartlett, John.
Barry, William.
*Bascom, Ezekiel L.
Bates, Reuben.
Bellows, Henry W.
Bigelow, Andrew.
Brazer, John, D. D.
Briggs, Charles.
Brooks, Charles.
Brooks, Charles T.
Brown, Addison.
Buckingham, Edgar
Burton, Warren
Channing, Wm. E., D. D.
Clark, Amos.
Clarke, Samuel.
Cole, Jonathan
Colman, Henry.
Coolidge, J. I. T.
Crosby, J.
Cunningham, Francis
Cutler, Curtis
Damon, David
Dewey, Orville, D. D.
Doggett, Theophilus P.
Edes, Henry, D. D.
Edes, Henry F.
Edes, Edward H.
Emmons, Henry
Everett, O. C.
Ellis, George E.
Farley, Frederick A.
Field, Joseph
*Flint, Jacob
Flint, James, D. D.
Fox, Thomas B.
Frothingham, William
Frost, Barzillai.
Furness, William H.
Gage, Nathaniel
Gannett, Ezra S.
Gannett, Thomas B.
Gray, Frederick T.
Greenwood, F. W. P.
Hall, Edward B.
Hall, Nathaniel
Hamilton, Luther
Hedge, F. H.

* Dead.

Hill, Alonzo
Holland, F. W.
Hosmer, George W.
Howe, Moses
Ingersoll, George G.
Johnson, Rufus A.
Kendall, James, D. D.
Lamson, Alvan, D. D.
Lincoln, Calvin
*Little, Robert
Livermore, A. A.
*Loring, Bailey
Lothrop, Samuel K.
May, Samuel, Jr.
Merrick, J. M.
Miles, Henry A.
Moore, Josiah
Motte, Melish I.
Muzzey, Artemas B.
Newell, William
Nichols, Ichabod, D. D.
Noyes, George R., D. D.
Osgood, Peter
Osgood, Samuel
Palfrey, John G., D. D.
*Parker, Nathan, D. D.
Parker, Theodore
Parkman, Francis, D. D.
Parkman, John
Peabody, Wm. B. O.
Pierpont, John
*Phipps, H. G.
Putnam, George
*Ripley, Ezra, D. D.
Ripley, George
Ripley, Samuel
Richardson, Joseph
Robbins, Samuel D.
Robbins, Chandler
Robinson, Charles
Rogers, T. F.
Sanger, Ralph
Sears, E. H.
Sewall, Charles C.
Sewall, Edmund Q.
Shackford, C. C.
Simmons, George F.
Stebbins, Rufus P.
Stetson, Caleb
Storer, John P. B.
Sullivan, Thomas R.
Sweet, John D.
Thayer, Christopher T.
*Thayer, Nathaniel, D. D.
Thomson, James W.
Thomson, James
Waite, Josiah K.
Walker, James, D. D.
Ware, Henry, Jr., D. D.
Ware, William
Wellington, Charles
Wells, George W.
*Whitman, Bernard
Whitman, Jason
Whitman, Nathaniel
Williams, George A.
Young, Alexander

OTHER MEMBERS FOR LIFE.

Abbot, Samuel
Abbot, Miss Abigail
Abbot, Ezra
Adams, Benjamin T.
Adams, James, Jr.
Adams, Philip
Alger, Cyrus
Alger, Francis
Ames, Seth
Ames, David W.
Ames, Mrs. David
Andrews, Ebenezer T.
Aspinwall, Samuel
Atherton, Charles H.
Appleton, Nathan
Appleton, Charles T.
Appleton, Francis
Ball, S. S.
Bancroft, Mrs. B. D.
Bangs, Josiah
Barrett, Nathaniel A.
Barker, Joseph A.
Baker, Henry F.
Bigelow, Alonson
Bigelow, John
*Bird, John H.
Bixby, Miss Keziah
Blanchard, Hezekiah
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Uses of the Communion, and the propriety of a general attendance upon it, Tract 172. I. Let it then be observed that, in the first place, the chief means of religious progress is to be found in this one thing,—that is to say, a just, clear and impressive idea of what religion is. II. All this being admitted, and being indeed most evident, the next observation I have to offer is, that all this ideal of excellence is perfectly realized in Christ. III. And I proceed now, in the third place, to observe that there is a yet further and more especial propriety in the meditations to which this ordinance calls us, because our hardest struggle in life is with suffering and sorrow, with injury and wrong, with calamity and death, 109.
Unitarian's Appeal; three Sermons, illustrative of the Claim of Unitarians to the character of Evangelical Christians, independent of the truth of their peculiar opinions. Preached in the Unitarian Church, Washington City, by S. G. Bulfinch Pastor of that Church.

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